

# CINEMA

MARCH 1990 \$1.10

*Papers*



KEELA DREW  
AND MARCELLA SPENCER  
IN THE COOK...

## TEEN LOVE IN TURMOIL

*George Ogilvie's The Cook...*

## THE COOK, THE THIEF ...

*Peter Greenaway talks artistic*

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# ITALIAN PLEASURES



GBR/It 1969. Italian producer Dino de Laurentiis decided to make a film out of Francesco Sartori's book *Il Piovoso* (The Rainy), with Gennaro Ruggiero by Mario Bolognesi and Rino Barillari. He also chose to begin the film with a documentary account of Sicily's arid and semi-arid growing farmland. The documentary section, "Il Piovoso", was directed by Mihailo Radivojević and photographed by Carlo Di Palma.

Reynolds Chamberlain in his book, *Antislavery or the Angels of the World*, talks about the trials at one of the 'hot' sites. The negroes had been destroyed, and the new known path to underground key in the Tim School at Rome. What chance, then, any interred negro seems to be destined?

**OBITUARY** In the early 1970s, Pietroletti *Il Resto del Carlino*, was listed as one of the world's greatest sources and favorite directors (the best according to Philip Adams). But after *Blanca*, his films became harder to see and his career reappeared in twilight obscurity. There is an 1989 *Il Resto del Carlino* obituary by Bruno Bini on *ilrestodelcarlino.it* and obituaries in the *Financial Times*, *Telegraph* and *Guardian*.

new plays of light, with no choppers and interesting patterns of casting, this is a shadowy tale of love at the time of *Dead Man Walking* (1995), or one of the great films of the 1980s. But how is anyone ever going to see a *Amber*?

OBIS: And why of the Blackbird? the marsh  
of the lake, great flocks make Louisiana home.  
The Mississippi Feared used to sing in the  
time based on his preserving account of the  
More office, but is never used. Why hope of  
seeing a marsh?

The answer to all these dilemmas is to have simple go-to-your-local-bank solutions. All the above items are there, along with innumerable other, seemingly-expensive-to-set-up items. These value sources are a gold mine for Australian companies but few seem to be aware of it.

Alerted by Roberto Caputo, I ventured out to one of more suburban Melbourne and began the search through modern nests of bird species. There, it turns out, was some action film, as a

It is with great regret that *Chinese Papers* announces the retirement of General Secretary for Hopo Media Sales, where she will handle the *Green Wheedley* magazine. Patricia had worked in *Chinese Papers* for eight years, beginning as Office Manager and becoming the Publisher. She deserves several days of retirement and will instrumental in seeing the magazine through its financial difficulties of 1883-84. She will be greatly missed. Fortunately, Patricia will remain on the Board.

errata to be depicted on the cover (see right), where isn't one the gothic vines will cover and smother the start? Be surprised if some Pagan Gothic vampires should have an attack on the deck of a well-furnished schoolgirl's swimming box like next year.

But back to the reviews. The other day was *Second-Deuxième François Le Final de l'Affiche*, directed by the Melbourne Central in the early 1970s and never seen since. It is a 'lost' film, but one that was researched, drafted and running the gauntlet. The *passage* should be incomplete when the chapter is finished, leaving a chance film to make a return.

Of course some may find the whole idea unacceptable because the films are classified (usually roughly) into values. Even though the ratings control the rating patterns, the use of values is far more important in the ratings than the words. (Dubbing also is used, but in the sub-codes there are many words in the lexicon of the system.) In addition to classifying a pattern that what is being said usually can be easily counted.

In *Cambridge in Other Novels*, critics became used to seeing films of their substances. One soon realises how much false importance is placed on words, as if the oldest stories can't be trusted at all. An startling verification of this was the success of *Cambridge in 1981* of 'the celluloid colour of death' with Michael Penning and Anna's names as levers. Watching without subtitiles (as in India) a became colour and colour becomes what they both build and write in an infinite relationship. This could be discovered from simple visual things, such as the way they reached their destination from Cambridge in national leaves. However, for an audience not knowing any subtleties of depth, the film's meaning until all was resolved by dialogue was lost and... consequences had to wait.

Dubbing is an unknown unique forces one to  
other other countries, over drilled by the word  
and American culture. So, any way of upgrading  
a vote on your local Indian men is a clash  
and also a lesson. Anyways, what is the  
choice, if one wants to follow the careers of  
Borowczyk (and of his likes) have made is to think  
that when you Claude Chabrol, François  
Truffaut, Luis Cunha, Luisa Ponte, São  
Paulo, Brazil, Argentina, etc? That  
is, one can, one can, one can, one can, one can,

## TELEVISION ADVERTISING

**T**HE AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING COMMISSION IS CONSIDERING A REVIEW INTO ADVERTISING ON TELEVISION. The ABC research branch found the viewer tolerance of advertising has decreased in the three years passed since advertising time regulations were lifted. The number of commercials in the three networks studied creased by 8.6 per cent, though the number of programme interruptions remained fairly constant.

As part of the review, the ABT will assess whether the amount of information in instant items and drama has increased. Publishers and broadcasters who are in a position to make submissions should make submissions to the ABT by 5 March.

Of particular concern here is the recent legal case in Italy where it was ruled illegal under the Berne Copyright Convention to interrupt a film on television with advertisements. The Owners

tion protecting mother's land. This was a single, and quite rightly, the last comment that she made and was a little bit stereotypical in its view of that final trial, as it concluded with that nation's right. However, assuming the story, which was legal advice, suggested the court ruling would hold in any country which is a *de facto* signatory, such as Australia and the US. Hopefully there will be a first case here now and will permanently establish from then and onwards.

The approach of French national television is the ideal: ads appear only at the end of programmes. The claim that people wouldn't watch them is false, it has often been alleged that the ads at the end of the evening news have the highest rating of anything on French television. Be that as it may, let's take a look at them in France.

# AUSTRALIAN FILM FINANCE CORPORATION

## FUNDING DECISIONS DEC. '89 - JUN. '90

DECEMBER 1990

### FEATURES

**WITNESS** (90 mins) Director: Peter Chapman. A surgeon mother and an assessment of her son's coverage as an induced abortion to reach the level of the baby's consciousness caused a furor to which many long held beliefs are shattered.

### TELEVISION

**HALF A WORLD AWAY** (90 mins) Director: Shirley Flax. Executive producer: Kim Davies. Story: Shirley Flax. In 1984 and with the great Depression over and the era of rationing passing, almost over, the greatest war ever is announced to fly to Australia, half a world away.

**A REPORTER'S STORY** (90 mins) Director: Shirley Flax. Executive producer: Kim Davies. Story: Shirley Flax. Growing up in participating the Murray River during the great Depression, young Mick Scholl comes to re-evaluate his life and values, and to make a stand for what he believes.

**MY TEACHER** (90 mins) Director: ACTN Productions. Executive producer: Patricia Edgar. Two brothers live in a squat situated in the outback. Mystery and high-risk adventure follows.

### DOCUMENTARIES

**IN THE SHADOW OF A GHOST** (90 mins) Director: Pauline Bondi. Producer: Rosalie Bondi. A study of the unique social and cultural life that is Dargaville.

**SOUL WOMEN** (90 mins) Director: Diane Morris. Story: Diane Morris. Gaby Russell aged 43 becomes the first Australian woman to travel the world solo as a single mother. This is her story.

THE TOTAL PRICE OF THE INVESTMENT WAS MORE THAN \$10 MILLION.

JANUARY 1991

### DOCUMENTARIES

**WHEN THE WAR CAME TO AUSTRALIA** (110 mins) Look Film. Producer: Bill Davies. The largely unknown story of Japanese raids on the Australian coastline as part of the war in the Pacific. A total of 97 raids were carried out, including the notorious submarine attack on Sydney in 1942.

**DEATHS IN THE BAY** (90 mins) Big Visuals. Producer: Gary Rose. Millions profit power the decline of Uluru Country - which is a case of mass. Deep in the country to one of these social cases begins a lost world of ancient secrets.

**STRATEGIC & POTENTIAL** (90 mins) C.M. Film Producers. Producer: Wayne Morris. An 80 year old age George Dwyer and his family find an audience from Hitler to Kennedy. The legend in industry and social become a leading national and public company.

THE TOTAL VALUE OF THE INVESTMENT WAS APPROXIMATELY \$10 MILLION. PART OF THE \$10 MILLION COMMITTED TO PROJECTS IN THE CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR.

## LETTER

### WHAT BUDGET?

The following letter was received from Stephen Wallace, director of *Blood Oath*.

#### DEAR EDITOR:

In your article by Andrew L. Urban in the last issue of *Cinema Papers*, "Scripting Blood Oath", there is an interesting statement that's budgeting \$10 million. This is news to me. The film I directed had a budget of \$7 million, which I had to strictly adhere to. Where did the other figure come from?

Yours

Stephen Wallace

#### THE EDITOR REPLIED:

As Stephen Wallace known from past experience, every Australian producer on *Cinema Papers* is checked by his or her lawyer before publishing. So this case, both Andrew Urban's lead article and his interview with Diane Whistern and Brian Williams were checked by them. They did not query the budget figure. As they are good practice, on *Charles Wainwright*, it was only reasonable to conclude that the widely published figure of \$10 million is correct.

That \$7 million was a likely statement is also surely obvious from the fact the AFC agreed \$6,000,000. As is well known, the AFC, with the exception of the Trust Fund, does not exceed more than 70 per cent of a budget. The resultant calculation is stay.

The inescapable question is: Why was Wallace told he had to work to only \$7 million?

END

## INDUSTRY STAFF CHANGES

**CATHY ROBINSON** has been appointed Chief Executive of the Australian Film Commission. Robinson had been using Chief Executive for the past six months. Originally from Australia, Robinson has extensive experience in the film industry, particularly in the area of film culture. She has been Director Cultural Affairs at the AFC for more than three years and was formerly Manager of the Media Resources Centre at Statewide The Cinemas of the AFC. Phillip Adams and Gaby Russell have been consulting to the Board of Commissioners until necessary to make her appointment as Chief Executive permanent. She will sit a splendid pile of running the AFC through the period of change ahead.

**JOHN MORRIS** has been appointed Chief Executive of the Australian Film Finance Corporation Pty Ltd (AFC). Before his January Morris was previously a director, producer and Head of Production at FilmAustralia, a producer, Head of Production and Managing Director of the South Australian Film Corporation, and, most recently, a Director of the New South Wales Film and Television Office. Morris has also served as Council member and Deputy Chairman of the Australian Film Television and Radio Board as Chairman of the Australian Education Council's Inquiry into children's television and as a longstanding member of the board of the Australian Children's Television Foundation. Morris said "The industry has been through a difficult period for more than two years and the AFC is central to addressing those difficulties".

## CINEMA PAPERS READERSHIP STUDY

*Cinema Papers* recently ran a Readership Study, funded by the Australian Film Commission and compiled by Newspoll. The main, simplified findings are:

- 87% of readers are employed in the film industry. In addition, 10% are teachers or lecturers. A further 3% are employed in other white-collar positions. Hence, 90% of readers are white-collar workers.

- Readers are generally young: 87% are aged between 18-44. In Australia, of those 18-44, 42% are aged 18-24.

- 28% of readers are male.

- In the past 12 months, the average reader has read 11 of 6 issues, choosing a legal base.

- The average reading time per issue is 2 hours.

- 86% would like to see the magazine published more often.

- Readers are relatively heavy users of the ABC and SBS.

- Readers prefer mainstream cinema and go at least once a month, arthouse and Australian films are also popular.

- Readers are active consumers of goods and services. In the past year, the proportion of readers are doing the following is:

Traveling overseas	6%
Attending film festival	4%
Bought TV/video	34%
Travelled overseas	3%
Obtained loan	21%
Bought furniture/home	19%
Bought computer/laptop	17%

These values are high.

- 87% of readers drink wine, 75% beer, and 78% spirits.

- Only 22% of readers smoke (amongst film industry workers the figure was 88%).

The results are so obvious basically most readers would like more of everything. However, set alongside such results support for an even smaller type size.

## AUSTRALIAN FESTIVAL IN PARIS 1991

The Australian Film Commission in conjunction with the Pompidou Centre in Paris, will be mounting its most ambitious cultural programme to date with a two-month long programme of Australian films to be seen at the Centre in 1991. The programme will encompass a comprehensive selection of films, from archival material to contemporary features and documentaries.

The Cinema Section of the Pompidou Centre has initiated international action for the presentation of various national programmes that the partners. Given that the French public has had few opportunities to appreciate a diverse range of Australian films, the programme event should markedly alter the perception of Australian Cinema, not only in France but all over Europe.

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# possessions

ANDREW L. URISH

REPORTS THAT

NO SADWAY

CROSSINGS

WILL BE THE SAME

FOR THOSE WHO SEE

THREE OWNERS

NEW PIANO

Eighteen months ago, Sam (Robert De Niro) had left happily for the big city. His girl, Meg (Demi Moore), insisted on taking him back, but he never would, never could. In that absence, their common childhood friend, Johnny (Russell Crowe), decided to step across the line, and, along with Meg, passed his innocence.

But now Sam has come back. His return unanticipated by his love for the girl he couldn't忘記 out of his mind. Bewitched by his arrival, Meg finally admits to still loving him, but not before she schools him like a schoolboy in the classics.

**T**

HE CONSIDERS IT A STUDY IN HUMAN

SHRINKING, THROUGH THE EYES OF THE

OWNER OF AN UNSTOPPABLE, PERVER-

ING, A LOVE THAT DECIDES ONE WILL SURVIVE,

IT TELLS THE STORY OF HOW, IN A SMALL NEW

SOUTH African country house, and ends in a

horrifying car chase over a misty

crossing.





**T**HE CROSSING is a universal story, told within the perspective of a single Arctic Day at a time when the 1960s revolution was but a stir in San Francisco and Carmel-by-the-Sea, and not even consummated in Sam's home town.

After some years of doing the rounds, Russell Alton's script was picked up by producer Sue Seary and offered to the Beyond International Group, which had been reading dozens of scripts in search of its first feature film. (Beyond had grown to prominence worldwide, then improvidence of the television show Beyond 2099, and later of an expanded programme catalogue.)

Beyond's head of film production and development, Al Clark, chose to go with the prospect, though some re-writing was recommended. Clark, an executive producer with Beyond's managing director, Phil Gerlach, spent fifty per cent of his time on location with an enthusiasm only equalled by Gerlach, who is converted. *The Crossing* deserves to be in Competition at Cannes this year. They have in Sam, its director George Ogilvie, they have a guiding force that aches worldwide.

Ogilvie stays very close to the actors, coaches and guides them privately, never shouts, never gets angry, his sensitive build trust, the trust builds confidence, the confidence generates effort and energy.

In the lead role, the three young actors have very little track record, no instantly recognisable name, and no formal training from any major acting school. Yet, there is a buzz.

Actor-director Robert Mianocone had been in Sydney for the year, where his most rewarding work was with Not Another Theatre Company. Says Mianocone:

George gives you everything, that's the beauty of it. But it's a hard story sometimes you want to come up with something yourself, and he stops before you can. He's stops ahead. He sees it all.

Meanwhile, with the classic dark looks that could earn him a place in Hollywood's best pack, speaks quietly but directly:

The most important thing George has said is that this character, Sam, comes from the heart. He loves. When most people are confronted by things, they think them, but he *feels* them and loves.

But what about Sam's leaving the town? Why did he just up and go? Mianocone replies:

We never actually settled on why he originally left. If we had, it would have taken away from it. So, there were different possibilities. Often in life you find yourself doing things without knowing why. He just had to go. His perception of what he wanted from life was so different to anyone else, he would have hated everybody if he stayed.

Playing Johnny, the childhood friend, Russell Crowe had just come from a smaller role in *Blood Diamond*. He was anxious to work with Ogilvie. Asked what it's like, now that he is, he grins and breaks into the verse of an old pop tune: "Heaven... I'm in heaven..." (from "Dancing Queen to Queen"). The answer is indicative of Crowe's other great love, music. He began his post-diamond life as a musician and songwriter: "I used songwriting to help prepare ideas about the characters, to help set it down."

Naturally nervous and very alert, Crowe hangs on every word Ogilvie tells him.

He said something very interesting to me at the beginning. He stayed until 10 o'clock at night to recite poetry because it's a淳ous thing. That's what he wanted from us in performance. And you get rewards through suffering. It just hit me when he said it.

Danette Spencer, who plays Meg, is equally in awe of Ogden's shenanigans.

He's a genius... He has the touch of pushing you to actually feel things, so, when you're in character, he talks about seeing it in your eyes. He actually brings the emotions out of you. It makes it easier to get you where you're supposed to be.

Spencer, who trained as a dancer, is excited by the medium, having experienced some difficulties. ("Where you don't get a chance to actually feel things") and wants to continue.

I'm probably not the right 'type' for this role. I'm really a city gal, and very much of the '80s. So yes, I have to act.

I am not so innocent as Meg can't be, in this day and age... And I've travelled a bit with my parents when I was younger, so I guess I'm more worldly. Meg is from a decent family, well brought up, with strict morals, yet very natural and down to earth. She is strong-willed, with a cool temper if pushed. She is independent, and doesn't need a peer group.

She was little absolute justice in that approach, because they had been close friends. But it grew slowly and naturally - he's a really lovely person.

The film was shot mostly in June and continues into November/December. The townspeople were most helpful and generous; the money spent locally was very welcome, and there was a genuine interest in the project. Nobody complained, even when the crew was effectively stuck down for the Arctic Day march, with 300 extras in 80-degree heat standing around until 10 p.m.

Of particular interest to the people of Jersey was the way the crew manipulated time - both the micro-time of Arctic Day, and macro-time of the era. Production designer Igor May and costume designer Karen Pye, recruited a subtle blend of 1940s, '50s and early '60s, which is often consistent with the town's reality, says May:

We are using the film's set in the mid 1950s, but it's an Australian country town, and a lot of the fabrics and styles are still of the '50s. Some of the costumes even from the '40s. They have to stretch out to buy the latest models, usually people tend to hang on to their own a bit longer.



It's another another reason. "It's a wacky thing, there's more of an mystery about the earlier era", says *New American* producer Edward Hopper. At a certain point, his expressionist style entered in the subtle muted approach.

I wanted to give the men an attitude which gave the characters strength. So the design is strong but simple. I basically covered up all the interesting headgear and made it plain and unpretentious.

Street signs were taken down, and the local heads used variously for interior and exterior. The Hollywood City was rechristened, with black and white Hollywood pin-ups on the wall above the tables, and an aged look of the 1950s clothing from the '60s.

Capturing it all on film (Kodak 35mm for exterior, 35mm for interior) was Jeff Darling, a laconic, urbane and respected professional who shot *Ogden's* The Blue and the Claws and *Yellow Jersey*. Young De Niro. He is using black and white and colour prints mixed in varying percentages, echoing the time span of the film. "As it all takes place in 80 hours, we begin before dawn when it's still dark, black... and of course it ends at night."

Controlling the colour saturation will create a subtle visual effect. A similar process was used in *Septimus* (1998), for the Arctic-harbour sequences, but for different reasons and with different results.

The various elements are intended to come together along with good visual music (directed by Martin Amisberg), in an intimate and emotional film, both satisfying and achingly real.

# George Ogiliv

*George Ogiliv, one of Australia's most regarded theater directors, has made a highly successful transition to film, first on the television mini-series *The Dynasts*, then as codirector on *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome* and, perhaps most notably, as director of *The Scent*, *The Feature*, *Short Cuts* and *The Place at the Coast*, followed and Ogiliv is now in post-production on *The Collector*.*



**C**an you remember the first time that a film made an impact on you?

It was a horror film, *The Spellbound* (Robert Siodmak, 1945), with Dorothy McGuire as the innocent girl and George Brent as the murderer. The moment you asked that question, I had an immediate recall of the girl's rattling sticks along a pavement to make it noise because she was so scared. I will never forget it as long as I live.

How old were you?

Seven or eight. I remember because I had nightmares for a long time afterwards. I also never went to the cinema again without knowing that just being there could affect myself. It is a very powerful memory.

When I first went to London, when the film was set, it was very bad weather. There was a lot of rain and fog around and so I walked past some English ratings I really recalled that scene. That moment still affects me very much today. If I am alone at night, in a tiny street, the mood and the image return to me.

What was the next thing that affected you about the performing arts?

The "professional first" was as a performer. When I was a small boy, I was at a school where the teachers were very drama and music oriented. I learnt the piano and was a boy soprano. Then I was discovered by the local repertory society and I began to play/perform roles in their productions. From then on there was no question. I was going to be an actor. And I was for some ten years before I began directing.

Was this in London?

Yes. At that time, there was little drama happening in Australia. There was no Melbourne Theatre Company or Sydney Theatre Company. One had to go to England to learn.

When I did return to Australia in 1956, I became a member of the first Elsternwick Theatre Trust Drama Company soon after that. From acting, you progressed very successfully to stage directing. What triggered the move?

While I was working on Melbourne amateur, Mal Cherry, a playwright who is now dead, asked me whether I wanted to direct a play. I said no and that I was perfectly happy as an actor. But he persisted, so I chose the most difficult play I could think of to show him that I was no good at it, it happened to be Lorca's *Blood Wedding*.



ABOVE: GEORGE MILLER. PHOTOS: PHILIPPE AND SAM  
OPPOSITE: IN LOVE AND LOVING IT IN THE STREETS.

That experience absolutely captured me, I couldn't believe how much I enjoyed it, because I never the music, got the thing going and even choreographed the dance. I suppose to some degree my musical education helped, plus I had always been interested in dancing ... though never as a professional dancer, mind you.

All this I think had something to do with my parents being very broad Scots people from the north of Scotland. I had a very Scottish background, my brothers played the pipes, and three times a week at least the house would be filled with 40 people singing and dancing. That had a big effect, as you can imagine.

#### Now there moved from stage to film.

I had always been a tremendous movie fan and, in fact, I preferred going to the cinema than the theatre. I have always found going to see plays I hadn't produced or directed a very painful experience. I am much more interested than the actors, always terrified the thing is going to fall apart. But then I love you to be able to go into a darkened cinema and *laugh*.

It was George Miller who then approached you to workshop the actors on *The Mentalist*. He also asked you to direct an episode, which must have been quite different to working in theatre.

Actually, it took me quite a while to get in to George's constant request for me to do direction on episode. As I've said, I love movies, but I had never thought about how they were made. So I asked George: "Can you possibly be on the set with me and tell me where I go wrong?", to which he very generously said he would. To have such a generous mentor is amazing, he was constantly willing to show, to teach, to provide.

I knew that I was working with a fine group of directors and, unfortunately when I had a question, would never ask. I had a director of photography in Dean Semler of whom I could ask, "What do I do here?"

So, I was filled with questions and answers as I went along – I had to be, correcting my first day as a director was with the entire Australian Senate!

Did you find a repeated that scenario where Miller then suggested you to work on the feature, *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome*?

George said to me, "You will co-direct the film with me." I said, "No," but he finally convinced me.

Did Miller say what he thought from you?

That's an interesting question, but I don't think I have an answer to it. It never came to that, in substance and conclusion.

Presumably one aspect was your experiences with and understanding of actors. Can you explain your approach to directing performances from actors?

It seems to me that the essential quality required by an actor is the ability to be spontaneous. It is a very difficult skill in terms of art. We are all spontaneous as we go moment to moment in life, but when you are on a set, and you've had to wait 12 hours to be spontaneous about a scene that you've just seen and over again on the next, it is a very difficult thing to achieve. It seems to me that everything I do in terms of workshopping is based on how to become empty and, therefore, ready to be filled up – the preparation in other words. I can't teach actors to act, that's impossible. I can only help them to prepare to be what they have to be.

In those techniques are what you learn in use on an ongoing basis?

You, I think, is it a form of meditation. That's very broad word, but I think it's the right one. In other words, it is preparation which involves trust, whereby you do one way all the time. After all, that's what produces those results.

I recall a workshop I did with some directors a few years ago and one of my first questions was, "Who is scared of actors?" There were four or five. That showed a problem in the area of communication between an actor and director and if there's no trust, there will always be a barrier.

#### THE CROSSING

You are now directing a film which is totally different from your television work. How would you summarise the story?

It's a story about losing, where the losing man cannot find either than a game being played; where, in order to go on losing, losing is needed.

The author (Barry Allen) has purchased love into young people, 29 year old, and he likes that sense of losing very seriously. The author says that it's possible for three 15 year old kids love and to know that losing can then and in total closure, unless it's fulfilled. If you're something that can be passed over or just used, adolescent love is a traumatic experience which can last a lifetime.

So, in that respect, it is a screwball film.

To what extent is passion and that energy specific to Australian life, or is it a universal theme?

I think you have already answered it: it is much closer to a universal idea. But all the actors are Australian and the anomalies and attitudes are Australian.

At the same time, it is a very 'local' film and not many Australians talk. They generally keep their problems to themselves. In Paris, you are all of life being discussed in the local cafes, but not here. It is a bit of a British overhang, I suspect.

The film is set in the 1960s. Is there a specific reason for that?

Simply to be able to concentrate on what we are doing and not be interrupted with other issues from outside, such as television. The town has certain isolation and education [Robert Maitland] comes back after 16 months away, he feels things have not changed.

Do you think it will be an important film in that it gives a deeper view of the human condition?

Yes. I mean, I was thinking deeply, because it is very simple. I feel the relationship that the young people have with their parents in this film is very true, and, when you are dealing with four families, you have quite a spin of universal reactions. People on the whole are terrified of change, because it's mysterious, uncertain, unsettling – it's better not to have it. Therefore, what the author is saying is that when love is needed to that degree it can, if society pressures point, become compromised and end in tragedy. It's a highly emotional film.

In that what attracted you to it?

Yes, and because it has to do with families. I am unattached myself but I have brothers and sisters who are all married. I have come from a large and warm family, one that supported me in everything I did. Therefore, the idea of family has always been very important to me.

Do you also have a family?

Not in the slightest, because my brother's family is my family. I do, unfortunately, like J. D. Salinger, who said that he couldn't give up the shadow cast. It's that. My life has been with actors from the word go and I have never wanted another life.

Do you think that the film will have an impact on, or offer something to, those parents and adolescents who are at that moment in their lives?

I hope so. But I don't think about such things. I'm just making a film. But I believe in it. It does suggest to parents that if a child is in love, then that child should be taken very seriously.

How do you view these emotional subjects like love?

The film is filled with roses, not roses in Chekhov. It spends just one



day, but every moment of that day is a critical moment in the life of somebody in that town. Being Anzac Day, it is highly explosive. Everything is filled with memories and the thoughts of those who have passed away. It's also filled with the thoughts of young people looking towards the future and wondering of their future when they see in their parents.

Was that the reason for setting it on Anzac Day?

Oh, very much so. The whole idea of remembrance is a wonderfully fine thing. The author loves it, and so do I.

The church service is a serious point in the day I know what it means. Every time I have gone to such a service on Anzac Day – my father used to drag me there when I was young – it was overwhelmed by the emotion. When you look at it, it is one of the few rituals this country has left.

Is there anything special that you do in terms of the way the film looks or in the way you are shooting it?

I'm not doing anything with the camera, Jeff Durkin is doing that. As much as Jeff and I planned the film together, I couldn't do any other way. Truly believe that a film belongs to the director and the director of photography. Jeff's equal understanding of the film produces what we do.

So, we have a film which is filled with stories of people and faces, faces seeking, faces needing, faces wondering. It's a film filled with those questions.

Do you feel destined to be what you are now? What giddy desire as an actor? Film.

Ah yes, it's certainly that.

You have chosen three as yet unchartered loads. Has working with them been a challenge?

Yes, for certain. I love working with the three young people, but I also love working with the actors who play their parents. They are our fine actors, who, in their words, can do what I want.

You have two streams of actors: the experienced and the novice? That's right, and to have them both is wonderful because one supports the other. It's great to see the young people working with

the parents and to see them get so much from the experienced actors, to see Johnny [Russell Crowe] work in the scene with his mother [Daphne Gay] and to see in his face that sense of alarm for what that actress is doing. That's great.

What qualities were you looking for among the hundreds of young actors that you saw?

Well, taking Meg [Dawn De Spencer] to begin with. I was looking for someone who was a secret person, who was difficult to read, difficult to know what she thought or felt. There had to be a sort of depth within her, like a deep running feeling. She is a girl who on the surface seems fine, no problems at all, but with a circumference below. She has been living with this fantastic need for a partner here that she has. She needed to be able to hide that.

Did you focus on a particular person or actress that you knew as a model?

No, I must admit I didn't.

The two boys are totally different, one from the other. In a sense, I suppose I recognized my own life and wondered what part of me was Johnny and what part was Sam [Robert Manusen].

Johnny has a physical approach to life, although that is a fairly mundane way to say it. He has an explosive thing in him, that it turns has to be released physically. At the same time, he had to be played by somebody with a very gentle nature. There is that duality.

As for the other boy, Sam, the last word I have is "gasp." He has a reflective nature and somebody who has a long way to go, and knows where it is. But he is also somebody who loved that girl and discovered, to his surprise, that he could love no one else.

Is there an emotional direction in which you want the audience?

Absolutely. That obviously comes from my theatre background as well you don't direct a play without thinking about that part of it. A

film has to be a personal experience, even more than that, where you can put on the mask a little. In film, that's very difficult.

I think the director's anguish comes through all the time in film. That is why, I suppose, Romeo would have to be my most beloved Gladiator. I lose what he does, because I lose the man that comes through. That I find very strong. His humanity, his love of and joy in people, the fact that there is never a villain in any film he makes.

Does the idea of directing a film which you regard as important create any special needs? Is there special discipline that you feel you have to impose on yourself?

That is a very good question. Once again, it's like meditation. Playing decided it's important film, you throw that away. If I keep thinking of that while I was making it, the experience would be deadly. You have to throw all that importance away and just enjoy each day as it comes.

And, of course, there is the craft side, the day-to-day work. You seem a very controlled person in the sense that you know what you want.

Oh, it's all worked out, yes, but it's worked out slowly. When I walk on to the set I can change the whole thing. I believe in spontaneity, but that only comes about with great preparation - the same for actors. Do your homework, do it really well, and then throw it away. You will find that which works.

Do you always think that the film you are doing now is the most important one for you?

Oh, yes. I really like getting into a shoot, there's no last night until you finish the bloody thing. Nothing else counts. I mean, I get a phone call from Sydney and it's *what's on*. Don't lift my hand and we're fresh shooting. So you say to people, "Don't ring me."

Does this sort of intensity intimidate?

Yes.

So, you are really immersed in the story and the emotions.

I have to be. I wake up early this morning, on my day off, going through what was shot and changing that and that. I never stop, it can't stop. I go through as much as the actors go through, you have to. You go through each turbulent times when you question yourself and your own imagination when you are an adolscents. You have that constantly on hand. When they cry, I have to cry as well, if I can't, then I'm not involved in the right way. I would be just looking for an effect. I have to trust my actors to know that if they have the right feeling then the effect will be there.

It is a 60-day shoot. Do you find that draining?

It's really exhausting and you need a good sleep. Every day is exhausting.

I believe that there is enough energy in a human being to allow that to happen as long as on the evening you can relax and have a go. But I don't mean by that that I need downtime. That's not necessary, but meditation is. It is something I believe in and do a lot.





Love sometimes been told on screen a million times, yet they always fascinate. Why do you think that is?

We truly believe that no human being is the 'stranger' – and also the most something, if you like – thing that can happen in life. To reach the height of that sense of love is a fantastic achievement. Those who appreciate it are very close to the mythology of Tristan and Isolde and others; that's where it stems from.

Is that because when we are occasionally fortunate enough to enjoy love, we do understand its power?

We achieve a sense of knowledge.

Have you experienced this sort of passionate love?

Yes.

And do you recall it with pain or with pleasure?

Both. If you allow me to say so, when nothing else controls you except following your head against walls, you do not quite see what direction you are going. If very painful at the time but, in retrospect, it is a very wonderful thing. You realize that you have experienced some vital love of living, and you are very grateful for having had that experience.

How much of the craft intrudes into the art?

I don't know, really. I don't. Every day of this film is the most extraordinary mixture of that.

So you can just concentrate on what you do best?

Exactly. I don't subscribe to the author-theory because I truly believe that a film cannot possibly be the work of one man. That's pretentious nonsense.

How important do you think film is socially to Australia?

Frightfully, unbelievably important. That's why I am keeping on with it. It is the very best to do, however you do it.

Mind you, I believe in both film and theatre. I can't separate them. Take the play I have just done, *Shady Valances*, with Julie

and Julie Christie back to when she worked here. When we first saw it together now we (previous husband), Julian and I were the "cool couple" in the tennis court, the coolies.

Hannington: It has been touring over Australia for the past 12 months, and Julie has received incredible mail from people everywhere. Some have been to see it five times and written to her, "This has changed my life."

So, if you really believe in the work you are doing, and the work is good enough, then it will change people's lives. And that's the most extraordinary – the ultimate – experience.

Do you strive for that in this film?

No, I can't. I can only make the film. I have absolutely no idea what the results will be. I thought about that, I would run away if I'm just making a mess, working day by day. We have Scene 37 to do tomorrow, and so on. Then all you can do, you have to throw up everything else. Obviously, you have time to think and consider and hopefully that's where it becomes technical. You have to distance yourself and ask, "My God, what did I do with the film today? Is there anything there that has connection with what I did yesterday and will do tomorrow?" That is a very draining thing that happens at the end of each day. It's very important, in say in *Henry V* (Edmund), "What you saw today, is that to do with the film? Does it seem connected?" Then it becomes a wonderful technical exercise and you can let your emotions drain away, that's when you separate yourself from the work.

## REGGIE O'BRIEN

### THEATRE

1955 Work in England and begin acting in repertory theatre  
1955 Returned to Australia, joined Australian Theatre Trust Company (under Hugh Hunt)  
1957 Joined Union Theatre Repertory (under Val Cherry)  
1958 Began touring in UTR.  
1959 Left for Europe, studied drama in Paris with Jacques le Coq  
1959-62 Founded "Les Comédiens Marins de Paris" with others, made series of television programmes in Switzerland, started to make programme for BBC  
1963 Greeted with Julie Christie's return programme for Edinburgh Festival, later had performances in London West End  
1963-64 Taught at Central School of Drama, London  
1965 Returned to Australia and became associate director of the newly-formed Melbourne Theatre Company (under director John Neumeier)  
1966-71 Preferred TV plays at ABC, whence first Melbourne Critics' Awards for Best Director of the Year  
1972 Appointed artistic director of the newly-reconstituted South Australian Theatre Company  
1973 Left STC to work as freelance director. Credits include: *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Death of a Salesman*, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (Australian Opera), the large tour with Joan Sutherland, *The Coliseum* (Bondo Festival), *Dam, Rat, Star and VI* (ABC), *Midway* (House of Lords), *The Kingkiller* (Melbourne Critics' Festival)  
1979 *Capricci* (Australian Ballet), with Peggy van Praagh, *Mr Mynte* ... *No Paul Dull* (Sydney Theatre Company)  
1981 *One Flew* (ABC), with Sutherland, *The Merchant of Venice* (ABC)  
1982 *You Can't Take it with You* (STC), directed Laurence Bergin and Faling (ABC), *Death of a Salesman* (National)  
1983 *Barber of Seville* (ABC)  
1984 *Barber of Seville* (ABC)  
1985 *Finian's Rainbow* (STC), directed Ross Gurnett (ABC)  
1986 *Shady Valances* (STC and touring)

### TELEVISION

1967 *The Damned* (miniseries) – director episode 3  
1968 *Multiple (miniseries)* – director episodes 3, 5, 6  
1968 *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome* (feature) – co-director with George Miller  
1986 *Short Change* (feature) – director  
1986 *The Price of the Star* (feature) – director  
1987 *The Bachelor (miniseries)* – director  
1987 *Touch the Sky* (series) – director "Princess Kate" episode  
1988 *Wilkes' Jamboree* (feature) – director "Soldier Soldiers" episode  
1990 *The Crossing* (feature) – director



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# Aspects of Technology

IN THE FIRST 100 YEARS OF AUSTRALIAN FILM

## DOMINIC CASE

The following article is a revised version of a paper Dominic Case of *Galaxy* presented for the *Not SHAPTE conference in Los Angeles in late October 1989*

To some Australian readers, parts of this history may be familiar. But it is a story so often ignored that it needs constantly to be remembered and revisited

**I**N 1912, a young camera assistant was on his first overseas assignment with cameraman Frank Hurley, the Antarctic explorer and *Commodore*'s chief cinematographer. The story they were covering was an ice-hockey game in Canberra. They set up the cameras. There was no exposure meter; no one in Australia had seen one in those days. Hurley told his assistant, 'Never mind the camera, just fix your eyes on the late. Don't look away for a second.'

The assistant stared steadily for about three minutes while Hurley fiddled with the cameras. Then Hurley came back and said, 'Now – look straight at me, boy – into my eyes. Okay... It looks like about 1/80'.

The assistant was John Langford Smith, he would be a leading player in the Australian film industry through many of its leaner years before the so-called revival of the 1970s.

But, despite the lean years, filmmaking in Australia has a history as long and rich as any in the world.

Menon gives film its first exposure in Australia as early as 1888. The story goes that Wilson Barnes, a photographer from Sydney, was returning by ship from a trip to London. In Sydney he met Maurice Souter. Souter was in Australia for the London company of Puff, and, unable to sustain production there, had returned back down Puff that has since so far as gone under. One account has him being represented by the Lumière brothers. Barnes never chance, and stopped Souter, he came to him and the stock back to Sydney.

On the 29 September, they opened their Salon Lumière showing the same programme that had been shown in the Grand Cinema Puff two months before. In late September or early October, they spent a day shooting scenes around Sydney Harbour. Back at Barnes' studio, they unspooled 60 feet of film and tried to dunk it into a tray of developer. Whatever the pan were like as cameras, they weren't much good in the darkroom. Most of the film never got near the developer, and it was all ruined.

Arthur Petrie, the darkroom supervisor, went home and thought the problem through, and spent the night building a wooden drum big enough to take a full roll of 35mm film. It worked, and so the first truly indigenous part of Australia's film industry – the laboratory business – was born.

Although we have their rolls, those first scenes of Sydney are lost, but the National Film and Sound Archive does have some of Barnes and Souter's film shot the following year, 1889, of the Melbourne Cup. Men of the film show the novel and giddy (of Barnes) business of arranging celebrities for the cameras – the race itself was too fast for the slow stock to capture.

Four years later, in 1893, came a multi-media event, at Melbourne Town Hall. It was entitled 'Soldiers of the Cross', produced by the Salvation Army under Herbert Booth – son of the founder of the Salvation Army – and shot by Joseph Petty. Its spectacular story of the early Christian martyrs used more than 200 lantern slides, sound effects, music and 13 rolls of 35mm motion-picture film, all mixed together, and ran more than two-and-a-half hours.

Much of this work was quite original, and pre-chronometer techniques in Europe and the U.S. by several years. Unfortunately, Herbert Booth left Australia the following year, taking the film with him, and it is now totally lost.

Filmstudios boomed in Australia faster than almost anywhere else. By 1900, feature



ABOVE: MELBOURNE IN 1900, THE AUSTRALIAN FILM



ABOVE: FILM FROM 'SOLDIERS OF THE CROSS' (1893), MELBOURNE FILMMAKERS BELOW: THE FIRST FILM OF THE SALVATION ARMY (1901)



ABOVE: FILM FROM 'THE AUSTRALIAN FILM'



DAVID FEENEY  
DIRECTOR OF THE DOCUMENTARY  
REMEMBER

films of 3 or more reel lengths were being produced. In 1906, the Fox Film Brothers made a six-reeler, *The Story of the Kelly Gang*. It was screened with hand-colouring, sound effects and a narratee. Only part of one reel of the film survives today, but the story itself was to be re-told at least ten more times over the years.

The big bright skies and long sunsets in Australia made photography an almost socks-cup affair and most of the companies learned. Most photography was indoor, and interiors were filmed on sets under enormous muslin curtains to reduce the light. The sunsets were often used, so much so that in 1912 legislation was passed in an attempt to restrict the number of 'corset, bushranger and "country hanger-on" shorts'.

Techniques, on the other hand, were quite advanced, and devices such as the close-up shot were in evidence perhaps earlier than corresponding work by the much more well-known Americans and European filmmakers, such as Griffith and Hepburn.

The pace didn't last. By World War I, exhibitors were looking in with the major American and British distributors. The war itself drastically slowed down production, and the amount of product from the U.S. increased steadily. By the 1920s, production had become very sporadic. Even so, Australia produced some excellent films. Raymond Longford's *The sentimental Bloke* of 1929 is arguably one of the great classics of the silent era worldwide.

Other forms were also successfully developed in Australia, and Frank Hurley's *Perth and Savage*, made in 1923 in New Guinea, is a notorious and dramatic documentary.

In 1927, the biggest production ever in Australia was released. *Perils of the Naval Life*. Weighing 60,000 pounds, it was directed by the American Norman Dawn and the cameraman was Len Ross. The film's innovation is in use of special effects. Dawn specialised in painted glass scenes, and he used this technique to "recreate" a ruined French settlement at Port Arthur in Tasmania, with great success. It was to be the last big Australian silent film.

Sound film had been around since the early days, and the De Fries Phonofilm Company of Australia had started producing short films in 1919. Unfortunately, its sound-on-disc equipment ran into difficulties when its American technical operator returned home. The company did not last.

Warner Bros' *The Jazz Singer* initially failed at starting the nation on. Certainly it caught the popular mood, despite its very limited use of sound, and within a few weeks cinemas in Sydney and Melbourne were packed out. Live theatre took a back seat, and on one Saturday night in Sydney not a single live stage was open.

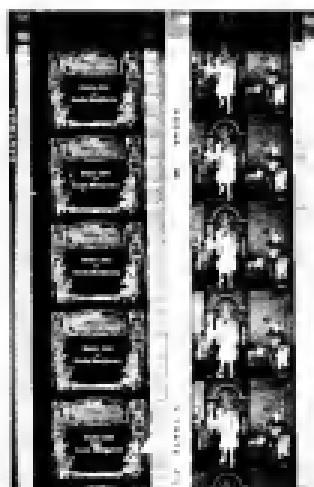
Now it was a race to equip theatres for the talking film, but the cost was high — eleven thousand pounds for one unit. Several Australians had been experimenting with their own systems, and, before long, Raymond Alliop had produced the "Rayophone" system for one thousand seven hundred pounds a year. Many of the smaller theatres, unable to afford the required equipment, and lacking the expertise to maintain it, were forced out and Rayophone arrived. Naturally his system did well. Even then, distributors blacklisted theatres that installed Rayophone, in order to protect the rights of Vitaphone and the other imported products. However, Rayophone was vital in helping a gap and small-cinema became established.

It took a couple of years before a complete sound feature was made in Australia. Meanwhile, there was much experimentation with short and newsreel items. When the Duke of York opened the new Parliament House in Canberra in 1927, government security intervened, and the speech had to be recorded from the official radio linkline 200 miles away in Sydney, while the film was shot in Canberra. Closeups were not allowed. This turned out to be a good thing, as the poor sync between image and sound was less obvious.

Apart from *Feature Newsreels*, Newsreels have always been a monopoly of Australian production.  *Australasian Gazette* had been in continuous production as a weekly silent newsreel since 1908, and was in fact the world's longest running silent newsreel. In 1929, Fox Movietone reported a sound track to produce talkie newsreels, having already established similar strips in France, Germany, the UK and the U.S. The silent newsreels disappeared, but other companies established



DAVID FEENEY'S FILM, DIRECTED BY  
REMEMBER & I AM.



DAVID FEENEY'S FILM,  
REMEMBER & I AM. SHOT  
ENTIRELY WITH REEDERS 16MM  
HOME-MOVIE MONTAGE.

THE ORIGINAL TITLE  
OF THESE FAMOUS AUSTRALIAN  
MUSICIANS.





TOP: BOB BROWN; AUTHOR  
CENTRE: BOB BROWN;  
BOTTOM: COURTESY OF AUSTRALIA

no time found himself directing a feature with screenwriter and actor Bert Bolay. The Australian production company, Cinemound was born. The film was *On Our Selection*, a remake of a classic silent film, in budget, \$8,000 pounds. It was a smash hit.

Smith's glow-lamp recorder was remarkably free of the ground noise that was a bugbear for many of the sound systems then being used. It was used in all of the Cinemound productions and continued to be used through the war years. In the 1950s, when magnetic recording was introduced, Arthur Smith was still at the forefront. He developed a portable location recorder for magnetic film which was smaller, lighter and better than any other. He obtained licenses from both Western Electric and RCA to use his recorder in conjunction with their systems. In Australia, the recorder was used by the visiting Australian crew to shoot *On the Beach* in 1959.

In Melbourne, Frank Thring Sen. started production with his company Elbow Film. His enthusiasm, flair for publicity and connections with the Hollywood system were believed by many to be the greatest hope for the Australian film industry. But business wasn't easy. Distributors were all American or British-owned, and naturally favored their own product. A tariff was placed on imported pictures as an attempt to support local production. It wasn't much help directly, but it did encourage local release pricing of imported products. It was this, more than anything, that kept local laboratories in business. Without them, the outlook for film production would have been even gloomier. Thring's sad decline in 1956 brought production at Elbow to a halt.

Amidst the difficulties, the one shining light was Cinemound, and in the period from 1958 to 1960 Bert Hall directed a series of 26 features all but one of them showed a profit for the production company. But they were a brilliant exception, and, when Cinemound stopped producing features in 1968, the Australian feature industry would not flourish again until the 1970s.

Behind the scenes, technical development is continued. For example, in the 1950s Brisbane engineer Ronald Jones developed a new system of film transport, replacing the close pull-down and the Metzger cross. This was the rolling loop system, in which the continuous movement of film from feed and take-up reels is transformed to a static position in the gate by a sort of wave motion. The film moves along a path much as a caterpillar moves across a leaf.

Jones published his invention in the *SHOPTEC* journal, suggesting that, if it had an application, it might lie in the field of medical technology.

themselves very quickly. Australians went into partnership with a record company, Vocalion Records, to produce *Australian Talking Newsreel*. Soon production was to switch to a sound-on-film system, and the newsreel would become *Cinemound Newsreel*.

Almost the entire collection of newsreel material shot throughout this period by Cinemound and by Melbourne studios today and in ever fewer countries, is forming an unparalleled visual history of our country for much of half a century. The *PTB* feature, *Newfronts*, documents the story of the Australian newsreel companies, incorporating much of the genuine footage of the 1940s and 1950s.

Meanwhile, by 1951, several attempts had been made at sound features, using sound-on-disc. Various local systems had also been tried, and all had difficulties and results. One story tells how, one day, a young radio engineer from Tasmania arrived in the door of Union Theatres in Sydney, with the immortal line: "I can make your pictures talk."

That engineer was Arthur Smith. He had a sound recorder built on the "glow-lamp" principle, an idea that had been around since 1919 in Germany, and which the American Theodore Case had developed into the Fox-Movietone system. Union Theatres took Smith on. Elbow's assistant manager of that time was Bert Hall. He was enthusiastic about the system, and in



ABOVE: FRANK THRING SEN., OWNER OF ELBOW FILM; BELOW: THE ELBOW STUDIO STAFF IN MELBOURNE, 1950



IMMEDIATE ASSISTANT: JOHN D. HALL,  
ON BUDGETS; DALE GIBSON,  
HOME PRODUCTION OF KIDS OF THE  
IMMEDIATE FEATURES; AND JAN  
GIBSON, HALL'S CHIEF DIRECTOR OF  
PHOTOGRAPHY, DIRECTOR OF



But the paper was seen by the Canadian inventors of film. At the time, they were stymied by the need to pull 30 mm film through a projector, 20 performances at a time, without ripping it to shreds. The Australian rolling loop proved to be the answer.

In the meantime of film production, with work fairly intermittent and unreliable, stability was provided by one studio, Supreme Sound Studios, and a number of small laboratories, including Supreme's own lab, and another one called Filmcraft, owned and managed by Phil Shulkin.

Supreme was the first laboratory with a colour process, shortly after World War II. The process was a Cinecolor type. One of the stages of colour development involved floating the film on the surface of a red dye. At Supreme, this was done in a 14 foot length of red guttering. The machine turned out about three thousand feet per day—mostly of cinema commercials, produced to accompany the Technicolor features being shown in the cinemas.

The first Australian colour feature was made in 1955, and used the new Technicolor process. It was titled *Jedda* and directed by Charles Chauvel. The location, deep in the Australian outback, proved to be quite a challenge. Chauvel was shooting in sun temperatures of up to 60 degrees Centigrade in the Northern Territory. The negative had to be sent to Rank Laboratories, in England, for processing.

The negative was shipped out to the location using a series of re-boats lodged in cans and under rock ledges, and some in native canoes covered in paper bark. He was flown out from Katherine, six hundred miles west, never a week. Stock was exposed quickly, then shipped back along the same relay route, and eventually to the more temperate climes of the Rank labs for processing.

The results rewarded all the effort, and, for the first time, the incredible richness of colour of the Northern Territory was shown to the world. Years later, disaster nearly struck when it was found that the early colour negative had faded to a single dye. Eventually, some old Joe-juice separators were discovered in London and the original colours restored.

The first Eastmancolor process came up in 1958, at Filmcraft laboratories. But still production limped along, unable to compete with the over-subsidised distribution companies. Eventually, in the early 1970s, Prime Minister John Gorton introduced government assistance for the industry.

Filmcraft became Colorfilm and, needing to install more colour processing capacity, designed and built its own machines, rather than face the cost and delays of importing everything. This seemed like a good idea and the ragtagging division became Filmfab Engineering, which now has supplied Australian-built processing equipment to every continent.

In the past few years, Australian filmmakers and technicians have found recognition that has eluded them for most of this century. The pattern that emerges is one of a country that has produced far more than its share of great film artists and technicians. With limited resources, Arthur Smith designed sound equipment that was world class. Ken Hall made pictures that never failed at the box-office. Frank Hurley excelled at documentary and feature photography. For three decades Australian cinema has been innovative, as well as artful, and they don't type up easily. But there is only one film capital. In a business that has been led almost from the outset by Hollywood, financing in Australia has been a constant struggle, with a lack of capital and with distribution general almost entirely towards the overseas market. It is an irony that in the worldwide industry of communications, so little is known of how our part of the industry grew up.

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# TIMELINE: 1895-1930

BY FRED HARDEN

THE FOLLOWING IS

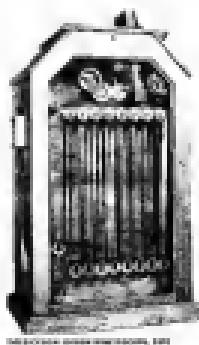
a timeline of original Australian developments in cinema technology, as well as Australian use of overseas equipment and film stocks. Regarding the timeline proved difficult. American and British developments were relatively easy to find, but the lack of Australian material, and the difficulty in tracing it, was sobering.

Edited below is what was gleaned from a few reference books on the Australian cinema (with thanks to the Australian Film Institute Research and Information Centre). Most books give only passing reference to technology when writing about the films themselves.

There are large collections of motion-picture and sound equipment at the National Museum in Canberra and the Powerhouse in Sydney, as well as documents in the National Film Archive, Canberra. As these are catalogued and made accessible, they will become a vital part of our cinema history (and footprint). This article, then, should be taken merely as a basis for more detailed later work, and hopefully will inspire others to research and write up new sources.

As the period from the early 1890s onwards is covered in detail in industry craft journals, this project has been split at the beginning of sound in 1930. A more detailed coverage from then on will appear in a later issue.

## TIMELINE OF AUSTRALIAN CINEMA TECHNOLOGY

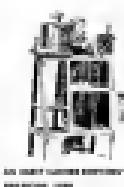


### 1894

20 November 1894 James N. McMahon set up the Edison Kinetoscope in Sydney and the first moving pictures ever were seen in Australia. When the public tired of the five different different perspective tales, he moved the machine to Melbourne in March 1895.

### 1895

January 1895 Kodak Roll Film is used by still photographers, one user comprising of the marks left by the contacts around the sprocket. The Kodak Kodax was introduced in October 1895 and was an instant popular success.



## Pre-1895

1885-87 Louis-Auguste Le Prince projected a short strip of moving pictures in New York. They were taken at Le Prince's house in Leeds, England.

1887 First public performances of Emile Reynaud's animated hand-drawn films on the Phenakistoscope film strip projector.

May 1891 First private demonstrations of the Edison Diamond Kinetograph. On 14 April 1894, the first models were installed at 115th Broadway, New York.

1892 Eastman Kodak showed his sequential photographs on glass discs with his Kinetograph projector in The Cinema World Fair. The first sequence of 36 photos was taken in 1878.

1893 W. Dickson convinced Edison to build the "Black Maria" studio, a wooden and tamper-proof building that revolved on tracks to follow the sunlight that came through an open roof. Dickson was the cinematographer of most of the early Edison films, the stock was Kodak. (See details in previous issue of *Cinema Papers*.)

### 1895

1894 The Lumière family give a public demonstration of their projected pictures, which were fixed safety frames mounted. Their contributions to shortening the effects on the filmstrip of the early projectors and the intermittent projector movement were a bottom sprocket and the "Lumière loop". The Lumière were in patent litigation from 1895 until 1910, as the loop was used by Armand Le Prince's Kinetoscope, and in a number of other projectors.

1895 Demonstrations of projected moving pictures in Germany (Max Skladanowsky with a projector that required two films and two lenses), and in C. French Johnson in the U.S. (using a continuously moving film and revolving lenses).



1895: Inventor of a motion picture movie projector, Auguste Léonard.

## 1896

August 1896 Carl Herff prepared the first moving pictures in Melbourne, advertising his projection equipment at Léonard's Kinoanograph. Apparently, it was already one of the cameras made by R. W. Paul. Herff had in mind the greater belief to be able to project the film from the Edison Kinetograph.

21 September 1896 Marcus Sennett and Walter Barnes opened the first 'Salon Lumière' in Sydney. The programme was the same as the Léonard brochures, first screening at the Grand Café in Paris. The Léonard equipment was designed as a camera-projector projector. But Sennett had little experience in developing, so it was Barnes, who owned a photographic studio in Sydney, who supplied the expertise to make the first film around Sydney Harbour in September and October. The Léonards must have approved of Sennett's partner, because they continued to provide film and film stock. The negative stock was almost entirely made by the Léonard factory, which in the case was purchasing the celluloid base material from the U.S.

21 October 1896 Sennett and Barnes closed the A. J. C. Derby at Paddington. And the earliest surviving film material in the coverage of the Melbourne City a week later. The fragments presented were by the Cinematograph Company to the National Film Archive, although from the original negative (1), they are continuous prints. There is little evidence of the quality (or the sense of history) existing from the event that was described by Arthur Friesz, who developed it: 'An splendid show... a good many film you see today. To as who made it, it was magnificent.'

## 1897

'Early' 1897 Major Joseph Perry of the Salvation Army Lowlight Department purchased a Lumière Cinematograph and a collection of films. (In 1900 his programme included three Cineographes.) When audience centred of the film the Army began (in October 1897) showing as well, processing them in a laboratory and studio at Bourke Street.

## 1898

February 1898 After travelling the programme to Melbourne and Adelaid, the Salons Lumière returned to Sydney. But revolutionised now revolution! Sennett travelled back to Paris and there was an advertisement for his camera and 43 "magisterial" short films. One source says that John J. Roach bought "two Lumière cameras" and that one was used by Albert 'Blond' J. Parker of Parker & Roach. Parker started the Austral Photo Co., manufacturing photographic dry plates in 1896. He emigrated by photographic dealer Roach in 1897. Parker & Roach was later bought by Kodak (Australia) and (not?) Edgar J. Roach became chairman of directors at Kodak.

## 1899

1898/99 Alfred Cyril Haddon, the British Anthropologist, filmed and made photographic recordings in New Guinea and the Torres Strait Islands.

## 1900

June 1899 Advertisement appeared for "Robert W. Paul's Anomograph" in the Times.

1900 Impressed by the work of his friend Alfred Haddon, Walter Baldwin Spencer purchased from Charles Urban's Warwick Trading Company in London a commercial 3200 feet of 35mm negative in ready 150-foot rolls. In March 1900, he fitted a camera and made photographic recordings of the mosquito a 6-inch diameter wax cylinder machine. In his 1902 book, he describes the difficulty in operating the camera and of only being able to get a sideways view of the small focusing glass and of using a mask spot for practice. The

1899 August and Louis Lumière owned a large photographic materials factory and their projector, whilst not the first, was really the first marketable design. They had seen the Edison Kinetograph in Paris in 1894, and adapted the movie film and projector walls by Edison. But, at first, they used only one sprocket hole per frame instead of four, and they reduced the number of frames per second from Edison's thirty to sixteen. The Lumière base model was light, hand cranked and, because electricity was not widely available, used an oilier lamp for illumination. Their first demonstration were in the Salle des Machines at the exhibition from 11 September to 12 October in Paris on 18 March 1895.

1899 October left Edison in 1899 and with a friend started the Bioscop Company, a different kind of projection show that needed Edison's prints by using a flip-book principle. Dickson designed a camera that took pictures 16mm high by 10mm wide. With partner Herman Casler, he went on to produce a projector late in 1899.

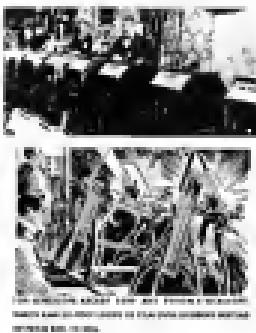
1899 Englishman Robert W. Paul developed a quick and easy processing system with bathed frames that held forty feet of negative.

## 1896

1896 Melies offered the Lumière 10 000 francs (US \$1,000) to the study film cameras. When they refused, he then made his own with parts supplied by Robert W. Paul. Paul acknowledged that the design of his camera, built that year, was based on one built in early 1895 by Emile Aron. Melies immediately began making trick films that used superimposition, stopframe, subtraction, masks and other on-camera effects.

## 1897

13 March 1897 Roach used his 'Kineograph' camera which used Glass film for the Corbin-Peterson's 'flying machine' Roach's film became major attractions to the early cameras. Artificial light and multiple camera coverage became standard.



1897: Robert W. Paul (left) and Alfred J. Parker (right) in front of their cameras.

## 1900

1899 Robert Paul invented 35mm film for motion-picture projection in England, France and Germany alone. The Jenkins-Aerial projector design was taken over by Edison and sold in the Edison's 'Vitascope'. Aerial's contribution was one of a loop motion the intermittent movement to be observed, and a one-wheel sprocket that helped a quick pullback. Aerial was the projector used at the opening of 23 April 1896 in Koster & Bial's Music Hall in New

camera is described as an 'aeroplane' work as a Warwick Cinematograph. The film was sent back to Baker & Kausey in Melbourne for processing; the exposed footage placed in cardboard boxes and in a safety bag. (More than 2500 feet of this film are the National Library collection.)

13 September 1900 "Soldiers of the Cross" premiered

1900 Pathé phonographist Dennis Davis, using a screen-based Edison Biocaméoscope (1), projected films from the biocam of the (over) Pathé Head in Murray Street on a screen across the street. The picture had to stop because of short films and advertisements, as they caused crowd problems on the street below. On 25 May 1901, Mr Higgins (one of the three famous Higgins brothers cinematographers) of Elizabeth Street, Hobart, was married by postie for a similar disturbance of the peace with his "Kicker Night Advertisements."

1900 Newspaper advertisement appeared for Gauvin Cinematographic: "For lanterns and electric lights, use 400 pounds... will accept 100 pounds Baker & Roche Spent."

## 1904

1904 Motion made of "coloured biocameras" being shown in Sydney. Perry had seen "Soldiers of the Cross" overseas or in local theatres (at the Pathé plant?)

1904 William Alfred Gleeson joined his brother-in-law, chemist Michael Johnson (who supplied chemicals for photography) and Edward Johnson in Gleeson. With the purchase of an "Englishman's" magic lantern that projected moving figures, they started showing films. They then employed a projectorist, before buying out his partner, projector and film. They were listed as the "best lantern operators in Australia" (W.H. & M. Hall), they made *The Story of the Kelly Gang* in 1906.

## 1905

April 1905 The Sydney Cyclorama announced it had imported a "professional Chromo Cinematograph". Cyclorama proudly announced some months later that its cinematographic machine didn't flicker.

October 1905 At the Centenary Hall in Pitt Street, Sydney, J. B. Phelan used electricity to run his big Biograph

## 1906

1906 George Robert Williams (later Sir Holberry) worked as an electrician for oil lamp company in Sydney. Williams became an expert cinematographer. In 1903, working for the (now defunct) Gauvin Company with his camera on the front of his motor van, he took some of the first street pictures of the Balkans War. He was an official AIF photographer in World War I (the film is in the War Museum Collection). He covered Antarctic expeditions and was another of the cameras' advocates in the French library. As a pilot, he made many recordings to early motion.

## 1908

21 December 1908 The Studios screened a film of the Johnson-Somers Fight which had taken place three days earlier in the same venue. This film brought in cinematographer, Ernest Higgins, the complainant. "The greatest effort of pictures were taken without photography because fight not." Higgins was a biocam operator in Hobart when, in 1904, he purchased a motor-gear camera and began documenting his town. He showed to Hobart where Constant Spence's tea shop in Argus and supply his saloon, as well as those of his two brothers, Arthur and Thomas, who also became cinematographers. The Higgins brothers' credits include many of the Spence brothers' and research- and others over the next thirty years.

## 1909

January 1909 The Salvation Army erected what is acknowledged as the first purpose-built Australian Film studio in Caulfield, Melbourne.

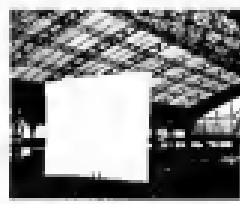
## 1910

October 1910 Englishman Alan Williamson, son of James Williamson (who made the Williamson movie cameras), recognized Spence's darkroom on the fourth floor of the

work. The system used an eddy current motor running over bobbins. Walter Edwards' efforts to renew the Kinetoscope business, he sold the new projecting Kinetoscope machine.

1909 The Luxevoi revealed their giant 70 by 60 foot screen for the Paris Exposition of 1900. They were also representing with them film but didn't exhibit it publicly. (At that Expo, Danish engineer Valdemar Poulsen demonstrated wireless radio recording.)

1909 Daniels & Louis (also a Blackheath-based company) supplied lenses for the Kellman's Biocaméoscope. Cineplex projectors lenses and Rayner & Baker cameras lenses.



THE LUXEVOI, 1900



THE LUXEVOI, 1900



GEORGE ROBERT WILLIAMS

## 1907

1909 Donald J. Bell, a projectionist, and Albert Howell, a draughtsman and mechanist for a propertor parts manufacturer, formed the Bell & Howell company. Their first product was a film projector which set new quality standards.

1909 James Stewart Blackton's *The Haunted Hotel* caused a sensation with its use of a stop-motion animation sequence, using 16-mm sticks. Edison films in 1908 had some 16-mm stick cards and Blackton had made a film in 1908 called *Woman Playing with Parrot* which used flat board and cut-out animation.

1909 Eastman Kodak still dominated with its orthochromatic negative stock. Sold in 100-foot lengths, it was also available as a positive print stock. Lumière had a range that included in Blue Label, which was about 1/2 the speed of Kodak (20 or 25 Adu, at that time), and White Label, which was about the same speed as Kodak.

1909 Pathé bought the English film manufacturer Blair and began a process of re-cycling all the developed stock in a round trip, stripping off the emulsion and re-coating. At the time, Agfa was manufacturing motion picture film, but the stock was not widely available outside Germany.

Lycum disease. He then became a producer, filming the film Captain Mulgagh. His conclusions of that time tell of the haphazard nature of the filming, often with doubts about the cameras' having functioned properly leaving readers of the film or its screenplay: "The cameraman would develop the negative so that on the next day anything unsatisfactory could be re-shot. This process would be repeated each day until it was considered that sufficient negative had been secured to be joined up into something approaching a consecutive story." Thus it was up to the title writer to bridge the continuity gaps with a clever caption.



1910 *THE MULGAGH* (AUSTRALIA) PROBABLY THE FIRST FILM MADE IN AUSTRALIA. © 1910



1910 *THE MULGAGH* (AUSTRALIA) THE FIRST FILM MADE IN AUSTRALIA. © 1910

## 1911

1911 Australian Film Corporation established a glass-coated studio at Manly.

1911 Most of the eight features made this year for Amalgamated Pictures in Melbourne were photographed by Orrie Perry, son of Joseph Perry. Orrie and brother Reg worked from a country studio he had Johnson and Gibson's cameras and bonbon manufacturing factory in St Kilda. The brothers did all the processing, editing and colouring.

1911 Arthur Higgins, then nineteen years old, was cameraman on Raymond Longford's directing debut, *The Poor Wedding*. The studio was an artist's studio in Rushcutters Bay decorated

## 1912

1912 Diamond staff cameraman, Richard Prentiss, photographed Francis Birtles' Impulse journey for Astra Australia with Picard Books.

September 1912 Cinema Supplies spent 10,000 pounds building an elaborate glass-coated studio with moving laboratory at Balmain's Bay. The construction was significant enough for the Premier of NSW to open the complex; film coverage was screened at the Lyceum that night.

## 1913

1913 Longford's Australian Gold included an elaborate model shot of the attack on Sydney by the "Austral". Cardboard planes swooped down over a large scale model of Sydney, creating, when intercut with actual Sydney locations, "a sea of fire where water and fire come marching down".

1913 Frank Hurley made his 4000-foot documentary, *Home of the Blizard*, of Douglas Mawson's Antarctic expedition. Hurley became famous for his amateur filming and still photography. His first film, *At the Grip of Polar Ice*, of the two-year Shackleton expedition, is his most famous. Hurley had to dive into the ice-cold of the ice-trapped ship to retrieve his film negative. It was developed in the tent and dried over Evans stoves. His had to leave his movie cameras behind and destroy "four fifth" of his glass plates. The film was welcomed because it was part of a 25,000-pounds advance for the film rights that helped fund the expedition.

Arriving safely in London at the start of World War I, Hurley reported to Australia House and was made an official war photographer. One aspect of Hurley's carrying the movie cameras at the front lines was it was some new type of machine gun.

Hurley took pictures of Ross and Keith Smith from the wing of their plane on their first England-to-Australia flight. In 1922, he photographed underwater scenes on the Great Barrier reef and, in 1929, returned to the Antarctic with Sir Douglas Mawson. He joined Cinemacon in 1936 and was again an official war photographer in 1939. In 1941, he received the OBE.

July 1913 W. J. Lucas and Godfrey Gao formed Lucas-Gao Pictures and produced eight features in a small, glass-walled studio in suburban Elsternwick.

## 1908

1908 Pathé considered its sterilizing screen for film.

1908 The Williamson cameras hand-cranked cameras became available. Eddie Gott's *Antaragonist* used 700 hand-drawn drawings traced over a light box, at eight drawings photographed for two frames each, as was true final animation.

## 1909

1909 Charles Urban developed his Kinetacolor process, by photographing alternate frames through red and green filters then projecting them with a rotating colour wheel.

1909 The first Bell & Howell silent camera was sold, to steady film projector built as industry expansion

## 1911

1911 Charles Urban produced a record of the crossing of George V in G. A. Smith's *Imperial*.



1911 *IMPERIAL* (AUSTRALIA) © 1911

## 1912

1912 Zeiss manufactured wide-angle lenses (35mm, 50mm), but most cinematographers preferred 50mm or longer.

1912 First color of Williamson hand-cranked box cameras, with internal magnifying, single lens and internal 60-foot magazine.

## 1913

1913 Louis Lumière demonstrated a colour system.

September 1913 Eastman Kodak Panchromatic released but it was 1917 before it replaced anachromatic stock. There was a big price reduction in 1916. It was revised in 1920, there was no classification name, but that stock later became known as Negative Film Pan Special (Type 1911). Panhyperion film was almost certainly also discontinued to allow the experiments in colour-separation processes. It was slower, physically unstable and expensive.



1913 *THE MULGAGH* (AUSTRALIA) © 1913

## 1914

1914 While travelling as cameraman with Kirtles on *Int. Australian Pictures*, Hurley processed and despatched the negatives en route to Australian Filmco and was paid £1/d. a foot.

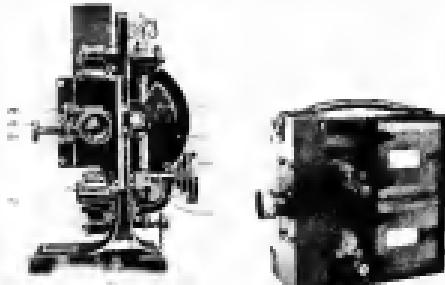
October 1914 Cameraman Bertie Bloom onboard the troopship taking the First Expeditionary Force to Egypt and Gallipoli. He was to eventually cover the war at home.

## 1917

1917 Australia: Coote used the services of Harry Julian in a series of propaganda recruitment films. Animation sequences have been attributed as early as 1918.



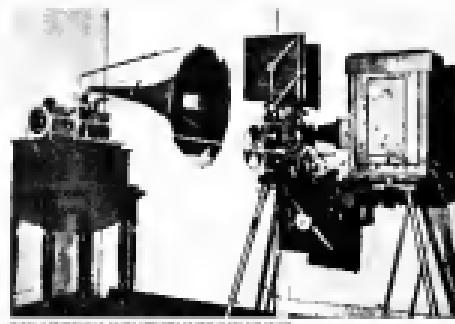
1917 AUSTRALIA: A film strip being processed by Harry Julian at the Julian Film Co. studio.



1917 AUSTRALIA: (left) BELL & HOWELL MOUNTED ON TRIPOD. (right) MITCHELL MOUNTED ON TRIPOD.

## 1921

1921 Ray Orling made his first experiments with sound on a wax cylinder synchronised to film.



1921 AUSTRALIA: RAY ORLING'S SYNCHRONISED FILM AND SOUND.

## 1923

1923 Frank Hurley hand-coloured every frame of *Frogs and Snakes* for overseas lecture tour.

## 1914

1914 Eastman's patent lodged for the use and process of col(oured) motion picture film.

## 1915

1915 Miss Fischer awarded patent for first microscope projection.

## 1918

1918 Bell & Howell anastatic projector released. Most editing had been done by cutting and cementing by hand, pressing the film (even negatives) together with the editor's fingers. The first "splice" was the Edison Film Master, actually a splicing block connected to the Edison Universal Soundscope Projector.

## 1919

1919 Prints colour released a process that used different coloured filters (the Lumetropodex), but stuck the two normal prints back-to-back in a single projection print.

## 1920

1920 A re-inked version of the Kautiova or the stock called "K-tack" was introduced for the colder East Coast filming conditions to help control the problems with static marks. Also released was a pre-tinned base print stock in a range of colours (blue for night, gold for sunsets, red for fire, etc.)

1920 (?) Introduction of Kodak Reversal stock.

1920 First Movielab.

## 1921

1921 Mitchell's first rack-focus camera released. Its movement was potentially quicker than the Bell & Howell studio.

## 1922

1922 First Williamson "Crafton" stereopticon, based on a standard stereoview camera with double-lens pull-down.

1922-23 German issued an 8mm system Tri-Ergon released (the "work of three" - Joseph Engel, Joseph Massole and Hans Vogt).

1922 The two-colour Technicolor process used a similar double-takes print to avoid the need of special projection methods. It was expensive and the colour was often called "a quarter-a-half colour process".

## 1923

1923 Bell & Howell released the Byrnes hand-held silent cameras, with a 30ft-footage and clockwise motor.

## 1924

1924 Movielab Midget, a table-top editor, released.

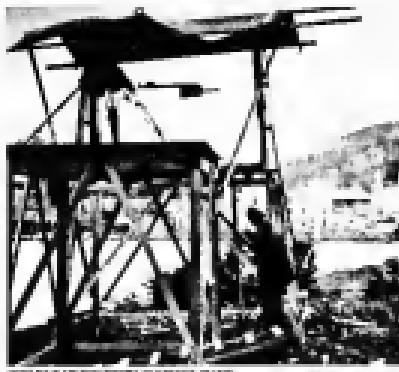
## 1925

September 1925: De Forest Phonofilms (Australia) was formed and the first sound-on-film shorts were made.

1925 Prelinger cameraman Claude Carter and Ray Vaughan established Filmcraft Laboratories and began to produce U.S. *For News* issues and *Fox Movietone* (Australia) was formed. In 1929 Vaughan was sent to the U.S. for training in sound networks.

## 1926

1926 Norman O. Dawn, independent producer, cameraman and director, started filming *For the Term of His Natural Life*. Dawn was well known in Hollywood for the pioneering of special-effects techniques – miniatures, matting and glass shots – and he used them all in the movie. His cameraman was Leo Baca.



LEO BACA DIRECTING NORMAN O. DAWN

## 1927

1927: The Sydney Capital Theatre was the first of the 'atmospheric' auditoriums to use projected stars and drifting clouds on the roof of the cinema.

## 1928

19 December 1928 Sydney premiere of *The Big Parade* at the Union Theatre, Lynton. By March 1929, Australia's 1134 cinemas were all wired for sound, and the travelling picture shows brought sound to many country towns. The Western Electric sound system cost 15,000 pounds to install and the contract included a weekly service charge. Indeed for ten years, Australian exhibitors changed their own systems to break the monopoly.

## 1929

10 June 1929 Ray Alton's Rayophonics system was first demonstrated.

6 August 1929 Filmcraft founder, cameraman Ray Vaughan, returned to Sydney from Hollywood with an American sound engineer Paul Hurst, and Australian first inventors sound track.

8 November 1929 The first Australian issue of *Fox Movietone News* was released, featuring a speech by Prime Minister Scullin.

## 1930

June 1930 Formers of the first Australian Talking Pictures, managed by Bill Lyall of Union Theatre, Melbourne. This used a sound-on-film system.

1930 Blowers back pressurised, working on Arthur Higgin's sound system.



THE PROJECTOR AND SILENT PROJECTOR, WHICH WAS USED FOR SOUND ON FILM AND SOUND.

## 1926

1926: The second Technicolor two-colour process introduced. This allowed mass production of a single dye-interference print. The three-strip process would come in 1932.

8 August 1926 Warner Bros adopted the Western Electric sound-on-film process, calling it Vitaphone. It was later abandoned in favour of Western Electric's sound-on-film process in 1929. General Electric, under U.S. company law (it named RCA in 1919), developed a different system, using a variable area track known as Photophony.

1926 Eastman Kodak introduced Super-speed Negative, a 50ASA, blue-green, low-contrast, photoproducing positive, which allowed better copy negatives to be made. This ensured equal film speed work.

1926 National Biscuit began manufacturing rockin' Armstrong Lee De Forest invented the carbon vacuum tube amplifier in 1906, which was widely used in radio amplifiers before making current sound a possibility. He worked closely with Earl Sponerle and Theodore Case, and each developed their own sound systems. De Forest calling his the Phonofilm System. Fox was to adopt the Case & Sponerle sound-on-film system and renamed it Movietone. It became Fox Movietone in 1929.

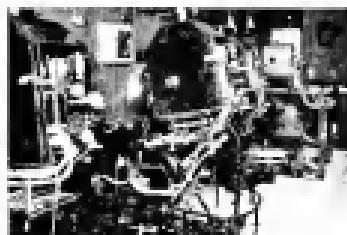
## 1927

1927 Melo-Radiophone started making lamps.

1927 Abel Gance showed his great *Battleship Polyphony* process.



THE PROJECTOR AND SILENT PROJECTOR, WHICH WAS USED FOR SOUND ON FILM AND SOUND.



THE PROJECTOR AND SILENT PROJECTOR, WHICH WAS USED FOR SOUND ON FILM AND SOUND.

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# Ray Argall

## *Return Home*

One of the great joys for any film-lover is to discover a new and promising director. Invariably, that resultant enthusiasm can lead to an overrating of what appears to stand out from the rest. However, there is no danger of false praise in heralding Ray Argall and his first feature as writer-director, *Return Home*: quite simply, it is one of the finest Australian films made in the 1980s.

Argall is well known as the director of photography on films of Ian Pringle (Hawker, *Wives, Wives* and *The Presence of Sir Pitcairn*) and others (Mary Gallagher's *Divorce Month*). With Andrew de Groot and Sally Bangs,

he heads the new wave of Australian cinematographers. But Argall's interests lie wider than that. He has made several short films and edited others, including three features. More important, he will be remembered from the start of the new decade as a filmmaker of real note, one with an exceptional maturity and a rare grasp of technique.

For many, Australian cinema had stalled badly at the flaccid end of the decade, but in the last years of the 1980s along came a batch of films that gave hope and restored enthusiasm. *Return Home* is yet another reason to approach Australia's cinematic future with a renewed confidence.

## FACTS

In 1973, Argall attended the Brinsley Road alternative school and was in the same film class as fellow directors Richard Lowenstein and Neil Jordan. After graduating, he made several films on Super 8, before applying to the Experimental Film Fund and getting money for his first feature short, *Morning Light*. Says Argall: "All my Super 8 stuff, and I guess some of my films, was pretty self-indulgent. Hopefully, I have learned it out of my system." At the time, Argall supported himself by working freelance as a boom manager and camera assistant. His next film was *Parasite*—"a disastrous movie."

In all those early films, I used friends and people I knew. That was my personal aesthetic style. It was really good training, because you actually had to work a lot on the director to get what you felt was dramatically right. It was quite amazing in my first few years with professionals, because not as far as how much further you can go—just that I went to production offices, because most people are natural and do a terrific job.

But people who haven't worked in film on Rambert's terms about how to move, how to move so and work with a camera. I found that was a lot of the cinematography I have done. On *Prisoner of St. Petersburg* for example, Ray's [Touchstone] was a very experienced director, but she hasn't done film before and didn't have the technical experience. On a performance level, the way people tend to get too large and a talent is while for them to settle down and discover what works well on film. They have to learn about eye lines and what you can do in front of a camera, like the difference between a close-up and a wider shot, when you have to do to make the performance real. That's why it's strengthened, even on the earlier films, a long, released period.

After debating whether to go to Swinburne or the Australian Film, Television and Radio School, Argall finally opted for Sydney:

I was there for three years and made one film, *Dog Food*, which I really like. It's one of the few films where I felt I influenced what I had set out to do. It was probably quite influenced by the fact that [then producer] John Courtney and I used to watch a lot of Bresson and *Das Kapital*.

Unfortunately, the Film School forced my film. They said the way I made it and didn't [receive] international [accolades]. But I was still very happy with it.

Argall was not the only student to find his work often enthusiastically received, though not by the AFTRS, for example, didn't want Jane Campion's *Pied* completed because they thought it was incompetent.

And there is the other guy, Mark Clarke, whose films were dramatically some of the best the Film School has ever produced, but he must have done something wrong—be he arrogant or he elicited comment, I don't know—because he had every kind of critic.

The School can be so horrendous. At the time I was there, I had never seen any such as these three made in film departments before then, however, and I have been impressed by a lot of the stuff that has come out of us. And the fact remains that a lot of good people go to the Film School, at which I mean people like John Courtney, whom I'm still working with. In that sense alone, bringing good people together, the Film School has made a contribution to the film industry.

After the AFTRS, Argall came back to Melbourne and worked as

"I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN CRITICAL OF STEREOTYPED MOLT, MISSING AND PORTRATED. IT IS NOT TRUE TO MY UNDERSTANDING OF AUSTRALIAN WORKING-CLASS PEOPLE."



a sound editor, before moving into the then-new field of rock music clips.

There were quite a few independent filmmakers around, and they tended to dip in and out doing them. There was Richard Lowenstein, Andrew de Groot, John Hillcoat, Paul Goldsmith and Ross English, of course. *Stargazing* was a short feature for television produced by [then] Channel 9 and still doing clips. It was certainly cool. Maybe the feeling is mutual—me and the visual companies.

In 1982, Argall made an independent film, *Julie, Julie...*, about a girl who has left home and is riding around Australia on a motorcycle.

We didn't have funding for that, so it was a matter of getting people together who were prepared to work for \$300 a week. It was only a one-week shoot and I used some of the money we'd made out of rock clips.

I really enjoyed doing that film, but nothing really came of it, but very hard to do anything with them.

At the same time, Argall had begun shooting features for some of Australia's leading independent directors.

I did four Picpoo's screened films. Picpoo, while it was still at Film School, even though I very wouldn't let me do it as an independent. They do it [there]—what an irony—that it would be a learning experience. They wanted people to go and work with professionals, but, from my point of view, the key was to get experience like to go to *Madame Bovary* or *Womish* or *Sticks*.

I have kept doing Ian's films over the years: *Plans O'Warren* in 1983, *Strong Medicine* 1984 and *Prisoner of St. Petersburg* prior to *Take the Lead*. *Abattoir* for Mary Callaghan. I was in a great position, because these were films I really wanted to do. Picpoo's cinematographic point of view, they were quite challenging.

Argall also worked extensively as an editor, cutting some of the Picpoo features and also *Blow Me Karn*'s 1988 *Love's the Devil Not to Me*. "Editing is a fantastic grounding, and that is exactly what I did at Film School."

It was also there that Argall wrote his first feature screenplay, the still-unproduced "Dog Food No. 2." It was his second screenplay, however, written in 1988, that would mark his breakthrough as a writer-director:

## RETURN HOME

*Return Home* is the story of one man's coming to terms with his past and the responsibility and rewards of family love. Noel (Dennis Courtney), in his late thirties, is a successful insurance broker in Melbourne who returns home to summer to the Adelaide suburb of his childhood. There, he stays with his older brother, Steve (Premier, J. Holden), with Judy (Micki Caselli) and their two children. Steve runs a garage in a shopping centre that is going backwards financially in the age of American franchises and a clutch of discount stores. Steve is a gifted car mechanic with a real love for his job, but it is becoming increasingly difficult to make ends meet. Both he and the ideals he stands for are on borrowed time.

Argil sets up this tale – of the negative forces of progress held tenaciously at bay by one man's honour goodness – as a metaphor for Australian society today. Values are changing as the face of strong consumer demand local shopping centres are being replaced by impersonal supermarkets and a swathe of drive-in food and video stores.

These 'generations' of Australian consumers and service are linked with generations of 'Family'. Argil begins his film with a brief scene of Noel, Judy and Steve in their late teens, when the local parson was a young Gary. Now Gary (Nick Mendelsohn) is an apprentice mechanic (when he is not absent, fretting about his budding relationship with Wendy (Rachel Ranta)), Steve is his struggling boss and Noel the emigre who left family and home. But Noel soon senses within himself emotional changes set off by the economic and social changes around him. And when he returns to his Melbourne office, the once seemingly irrelevant family memories now resonantly infused with meaning, one senses a stand will be made.

Simply but effectively shot (Argil cuts and tracks only when he really needs to), with a subtle and affecting screenplay and an understated level of performance rare in Australian film, *Return Home* deserving of every bit of praise it will undoubtedly receive. That is not to say it is perfect – the characters' carefully judged pace falter occasionally past the middle, some scenes drift a fraction too much and there is the odd gratuitous moment – but the film doesn't distract significantly. *Return Home* an significant achievement.

Before leaving for overseas, and, as it would later turn out, a visit to the Berlin Film Festival, where his film was screened in the Panorama section, Argil spoke with his former Brinsley Ford like reader:

One of the unusual aspects of *Return Home* is that you have written a first film with characters older than yourself. The *Wild Strawberry*



like concept of a man's returning home and being affected by all the changes is generally associated with characters of an older age group, ones who have perhaps reached a sort of collective point in their lives.

[Laughs] Maybe I twinge but I've had to do that film when I get old!

When I first wrote *Return Home*, the characters were even older. Maybe that came from observing a lot of people in that age group who had reached the point of not knowing where to go with their lives. I felt I was in the middle, between the young petro-chemical apprentice and the older two brothers.

I had some people who run little service stations in Bourke, Dimboola, and the stories they told were very colourful. That is probably where the original idea germinated.

In terms of what ended up on screen, the film is no longer based on them specifically, although the setting is. However, I did go back to them for more research, to find out how they actually operated, what sort of pressures they were under and so on.

Your film can be read as a metaphor of economic and social changes within Australia. Most pointed in the scene where Steve says he doesn't want to make money, he just wants to stay in business. He stands for a work ethic that has been largely eroded by progress.

Exactly. Progress has a momentum that cannot be stopped. It just rolls along, taking a lot of people in its wake. In the past to come, people will probably look back and say, 'Gee, I miss that little garage that used to be on the corner.' The people were always really nice to me. 'Maybe the garage has been replaced by a McDonald's store.' In fact, the site where we filmed – it was a dairy service station – is now a Hungry Jack's.

It is sad that these people who were providing a service are promoted by channelling profits into succumbing to a fast-food company. It is a major problem.

There is something noble about Steve's resistance to progress, though he presumably adopts a little to it after Gary's visit. Without being sentimental, you depict a fissure in the man that seems being cracked.

I'm glad that has come across, because it is difficult portraying something like that. One accepts that progress is inevitable, which is not all bad, but there are aspects which are, such as the effect on people like Steve. That is why others, particularly Noel, are trying to find ways to ease the tension. Sadly, there may not be a point at which they can meet.





Yours, however, and on a note of optimism, which is unusual in that most films about the negative effects of progress end on a note, as it believing it makes the planet more livable.

Previously I think there was no particular negative at the end of this film. The whole point is that Noel realises that whether in doing what he has to do, and that he could apply some of what he knows to help his brother. You do not know what will come of it, but Noel has made the step to try and do something, no matter how little, that might actually affect people for the better. And because it is such people he feels close to, it is probably more rewarding than pulling off a few really big, massive deals in McMurtry.

So, I went for an optimistic suggestion at the end, hoping that might make people think a little more about things. People like to be rewarded at the end of a film.

Another aspect that remains quite subtle is the sense of generations passing. The film opens when Gary has a paperboy you then cut forward to him as an entrepreneur, while a newspaperboy rides his bike past the garage.

That stuff is tough and you, and again is really hard to get right. It was one of several things I was interested in charting along the shopping centre which surrounds the garage. But it's very difficult to show the subtle changes progress imposes on the small group of people without making the film look like a documentary or a soap opera.

You mentioned earlier you always like to re-think your actions extensively. Did you do this on *Return Home*?

Yes, we had nearly four weeks of rehearsals, which is quite a lot. I really wished I went any less, because that is where we ground out all the bugs.

I have noticed from shooting other people's films that you tend to get rather frustrated if they don't have enough of the director's time. If they do get a lot of it in rehearsals and pre-production, most of their questions will get answered.

To what extent did you rewrite the script during rehearsals?

Not a lot. It depended on whether things were working or not, whether actors wanted to re-think lines and to feel more comfortable with them, which sometimes works.

Quite often, when you edit a scene after the shoot, you find that what you developed in rehearsals like keeps that scene. They are the moments you really want to keep, and some of the stuff you previously thought essential can be cut.

A good example is the scene where Noel and Gary are sitting on the beach, looking out over, with waves lapping at the distance. Gary is a bit trapped in that big country town, Adelade, and he's interested in this psychotherapy world. Noel has come from where Gary is now and achieved something, even if that path won't one he wants to follow. Likewise, Noel is interested in Gary's problem with his girlfriend, Wendy. He's looking back to problems he's had in working out a relationship. Since leaving Adelade, Noel hasn't been able to adjust, and we can see in Gary some of the things he is trying.

As originally scripted, that scene had a lot of stuff that on the surface told you what the characters were thinking. But as rehearsals, the actors played around to see what they could come up with—the way to look at each other, how to work around the subject without going there/here. In the end, a lot of the explicit dialogue I had written was cut.

Of course, it can go the other way. One scene I extended is where Gary goes to see Wendy, and they talk on the verandah. That had stayed pretty much as it was written on the first draft. But when we came to shoot it, the screen playing Wendy, Rachel Bates, didn't fall under her a charm, which believe on can interpret differently. That made her try even harder, which worked really well in the scene.

There's quite a lovely moment, though where she asks, "What's that you're writing?" Gary has put on a mask after school, and he replies, "Oh, it's one of Dad's." She says, "I like the smell of pencil better." The actors managed to carry the conversation a little, which works really nicely. I'm not one for re-writing scenes completely, but I had always felt a little about the way I had written it. Now it is basically resolved.

There are all sorts of things you should look at as trying to get a roundness to a scene, in making sure it concludes effectively.



It is, on the whole, a perfectly acted film. You find aspects of Australian behaviour without ever slipping into other countries.

I have always been critical of the clichéd, stereotyped way Aussies are portrayed. It is not true to my understanding of Australian working class people. I don't know if it comes from the television soap, and it is actually found most often in war films.

Maybe it is the actors, maybe the directors. I don't know if it's the writing, but probably not as much as people think; after all, it is the directors and actors who interpret the script.

During rehearsals, all the actors in *Action Man* slipped into that other style. The swearing, for instance, was just incredible. Unfortunately, I didn't pull it back early enough, and during filming I dialogue a few problems with the "bloody's" and the "mate's" - "How bloody going mate?", and that sort of thing. It sounds okay on the nose, but not when you hear it all the time in a film.

In many Australian films, the language reveals affection, as if the middle-class director is assuming a working-class pose.

I think you're right. If you have been through the private-school system and university, you can easily gain a narrow view of the working classes. It is not as if such directors are not broad-minded, it is just that their understanding of others is sometimes limited by their upbringing.

Making *Armageddon in Adelaide* obviously made it a lot easier for me, because that is where I went after leaving school. I got a car, boxed it up and did all those sort of things. Although I had been making films, they were almost a hobby. It was like I went to Adelaide to find out about the way of life. I went there because I wanted to have a car and do these sort of things.



#### Why is Adelaide the last real capital of the universe?

I really don't know, but it sure is. The car culture there is quite incredible. You may find a little in Tasmania, but in Adelaide, with those wide open roads, it almost looks and looks like L.A.

I first went to Adelaide in the mid 1970s. The funny thing is that when you go back there now, whole slabs of the place are just as they always were. It is a wonderful sort of time warp. You can go back to a fruit juice bar in an arcade that you never even from 20 years ago, and it will there. Maybe it is not really the same people, but the new owners haven't increased it or changed the layout. It is like one generation growing and the next following. Look at the obsession with Esky and spray-on pants, and apple-scented soaps. It is still there. Quite incredible.

So, if the *Blindfold* broadcast, say, in Melbourne it would not have had the same generational aspects.

Yes, I don't think I could have made the same film in Melbourne or Sydney, which are big cities. Adelaide has something very unique.

That is why it was fantastic to shoot the film there. We stayed out at Cleve, where we were filming, and there were cars constantly going by doing all the things that are in the script. This was great for the action, because they felt and understood the integrity the script had.

Your editor is Ken Sallows, one of the under-appreciated talents in the Australian industry.

Working with Ken was just terrific. He is a very perceptive editor, who can look at a film as a whole. When I was an editor, I was good on individual scenes, but I always had trouble with the overall production, usually getting the whole down to a workable length.

*Action Man* is a carefully structured film, both overall and within scenes. Did you go into the set knowing precisely how you would shoot each sequence?

I would. With some scenes, I thought it was best to wait until the editing stage to find out how to structure them. This was particularly the case when two characters were just talking to each other and there was not a lot of movement.

It is terrific to be able to go on to location with an editing background, because you know how things are going to be put together. Without that knowledge, people can find editing and things like that very frustrating.





You use many long two-shots in the film, particularly in the garage scene, where Ned and Steve watch out over the shopping centre.

Generally we designed the two shots we were going to use, and choreographed them specifically. Quite often in the garage we would have a two-shot where one person was in the foreground and another in the background, then someone would walk over to the bench or a car. At that point, we would cut to another two-shot. That took quite a while to set up, because it is not just simple as having two people in frame. To cover ourselves, we would do a point-of-view cutaway or a close-up.

Marilyn Walker, the director of photography, is very good on that stuff. She known how to balance up a frame, which is a big help to me as a director. I can concentrate on everything else that is going on.

With some of the dramatic scenes, when two people are talking to each other, it is nice to cover it in just close-ups. Matching close-ups is just wonderful; you can really pick the moments and stretch them. Take for example the scene with Gary and Wendy on the porch. We did a two-shot for the opening and the ending, but the rest and close-ups. It is really nice to be able to hold, or play an off-screen line as an actor. You can maximize the whole performance from each of the actors.

There are several brief montages in the film, generally of two or three shots, which set up the next scene. This is a technique I learned and which Paul Schrader paid homage to in *American Gigolo*. Did you use them consciously in that way?

Probably not consciously, but certainly it is very nice to have those allusions.

Those brief montages were very hard to get right. We spent a lot of time shooting them. Marilyn and I went out on our weekends off and shot what we could, like the kids jumping off the pier.

Which is one of the most moving images of 1998's Australian cinema.

That's great, because that is exactly what we wanted to get out of it. It's wonderful when you get a shot that works.

The opening of your film is like an industrialized version of the beginning of *The Year My Father Died*, with the combination of charred mosa and the evoking of a time past.

The pricing of the mosa was really tricky. Originally it was a pop song from the era, and for a lot of people it worked well. But it set up expectations of a teen pic, which the film isn't. Audiences may then have felt that what followed was a let-down.

Several sequences, like some of Ned's shots, are done in slow motion.

I then thought of the Dvorak (Symphony No. 9) and I think it helped give the impression of us being a memory.

You get that with the sound mix, too, when the realistic sounds of the car park are faded in for a few seconds.

We wanted that slightly subjective aspect to the soundtrack. I like to notice sounds and play with them, bringing them up and down.

Darin Cooper, who did the sound recording and also mixed the film, did a really good job on that. Overall, and especially given the difficulties, the sound department did a great job.

Which raises the question of the film's very small budget (\$350,000, from the ABC). Despite what must have been inevitable production problems, the film never feels as if it suffered.

Most people say that, which is good. I think the tag of low budget is really bad, and I would not call cost. If people ask me what the film was made on, I say, "Under a million."

In the end, it didn't have big things. The cast and the crew agreed to work under the conditions, which were basically union minimum. We had a fairly reasonable schedule; it was tight, but we had time to do what we wanted to do.

Also, Marilyn and I didn't want a hand-held, gritty look, but one that was really clean and sharp. That decision greatly helped the overall look of the film.

There is very little camera movement in the film.

I do do a lot of tracking, but, when I do, I signed to have a crane long one. There are only two crane shots in the film.

We didn't have a grip on location, so we chose to advance the three or four scenes where I wanted to move the camera. We then hired a grip for those days. It was the same when we were doing the car stuff. We had trouble doing that, but we managed to get the extra people for it.

Most of the films I have done have been with small crews. In Europe, of course, they make their 35mm features with small crews. But out here we have the Hollywood attitude of big crews. On *Akira Kurosawa*, we probably were a lot short in the art department, and we didn't have costume or make-up, except for one day, when we had to make the characters look a bit younger.

All the same, there is no reason why low-budget films have to look low-budget. I constantly know that.



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# BANGKOK HILTON

and

# A LONG WAY FROM HOME: BARLOW AND CHAMBERS

BY INA BERTRAND

*It was inevitable that their two mini-series should be compared: not only are they about the same subject (Australians facing the death penalty in an alien land for drug running), but writer Terry Hayes made the connection explicit by stating in an interview that his inspiration for the story of *BANGKOK HILTON* (Ken Cameron, 1989) was his dismay at the dramatic deficiencies in the story of *A Long Way from Home: Barlow and Chambers* (Jerry London, 1988).<sup>1</sup>*

*He went on to suggest that the latter was doomed from the start: "because how are you ever going to get audience sympathy for a couple of guys who are drug runners?"*

**C**ERTAINLY, Hayes was right to suggest that the key to the dramatic structure of both narratives is the guilt/innocence of the main characters but the comparison between them is rather more complex than Hayes suggests, and deserves some more detailed examination.

To some extent, Hayes answers his own question, with the characters of Mandy (Joy Southern) and Billy (Noah Taylor) in *Bangkok Hilton*. Both are technically guilty, but neither is entirely responsible for his or her actions. The drug-dependence of their mother ensured that Mandy was born addicted and Billy mentally retarded. Feeding her habit is, then, not entirely voluntary or self-indulgence for Mandy: she cannot be simply condemned for her weakness. Neither can Billy. His simple-mindedness led him to insist on carrying Mandy's bag for her, as it is he who is caught 'red-handed', and is technically the guiller of the two.

Added to the idea of 'diverted responsibility' is the shared helplessness of the characters, and the sympathy evoked by the strength of the bond between them. Mandy's love for Billy is one of the reasons for her breaking the law in the first place (she wants to use the money to pay for a trip on an economy-line, his highest avocation), and it leads her to take great risks to protect him while they are in jail and to beg him with her captions, offering her life for his. Viewers, therefore, are completely upon their side in the horror of the excursion across no Man's Land.

The writer of *A Long Way from Home*, William Kirby, did not have the freedom to invent such circumstances, to play upon the emotions to gain the sympathy of an audience. Through the press reports, both of the trial and of the efforts of Barbara Barlow to achieve a reduction of the sentence, the Australian public



ABOVE: BARBARA BARLOW (JOAN CRAWFORD)  
IN FRONT OF AN IMAGE OF HER SON, RYAN (NOAH TAYLOR)  
JERRY LONDON'S A LONG WAY FROM HOME:  
BARLOW AND CHAMBERS

knew the end of the story before the series opened. Constrained (at least to some extent, not only by the 'fact' of 'factual', but by the public's knowledge of these 'facts'), the more Kirby could do was manipulate within certain pre-established boundaries. There are several strategies he chose to employ:

LEFT: BARLOW (ROBERT DUVALL), THE POLICE AGENT (JOHN CARRINGTON), CHAMBERS (HUGO WERNIGER), BARLOW'S MOTHER (KATHARINE VENICE), KENYA (A MELAYAN GIRL), AND, RIGHT: BARLOW (A BURMESE BOY) DROPPING CHAMBERS (ROBERT DUVALL) IN A DOG'S MOUTH FROM A HELICOPTER.



The first was to appropriate blame (and so, sympathy) between the two characters in the mini-narration of the story, both are guilty, but Barlow (John Polaco) is less so than Chambers (Hugo Werniger). Chambers is a assumed drug courier; Barlow is a novice, forced into a life of crime by social circumstances (poverty, lack of rewarding work, persecution by the police for crimes of which he is innocent). Chambers is cold and calculating, entering willingly into the scheme; Barlow is all, frightened and forced to participate against his will. Chambers takes a part in persuading Barlow to carry the package when Barlow's shyness and fear lead to their capture, the audience is invited to sympathise with the weaker of the two characters.

The second strategy was to shift responsibility from the two young men to the woman who 'let them down'. Barlow would never have done it if his girlfriend had not had an abortion against herself and left him shattered by her betrayal. Chambers was in shock after the death of his innocent girlfriend in an accident for which he feels responsible. The suffering of each is clearly presented (Barlow in no attempt to suggest, for instance, that Chambers' grief is anything but real and very painful), but the difference in these two stories also contributes to the apprehension of sympathy between them: again, Barlow an innocent victim of the perfidy of others while Chambers is suffering for his own stupidity.

The third strategy was to introduce an aspect of moral growth into the character of Barlow, while at the same time destroying such changes as Chambers is to Kenya Barlow, who will almost the end of the story had been shown as weak, unyielding and, several rather than moral, undergoing painful conversion to high moral principle, rejecting his mother's offer of poison as a way to cheat the hangman on the grounds that it is a sin problem which he must face himself, and turning to pray (just as Chambers refuses that comfort).

Really, racism becomes a strategy for eliminating sympathy from at least western audiences: the programme implies that even when women are (feminist) are guilty, they do not deserve to suffer at the hands of Asian legal systems, with their odd continuation procedures, inhuman treatment of prisoners as goods and before time penalties.

Clearly, all of the above are narrative strategies, with no necessary connection to the 'factual' of 'history'. These strategies, however, even at the narrative level, are never more than temporarily successful, because they are constantly undermined by the interests of other strands of a narrative which cannot make up its mind whether it is a police story about a drug bust, a melodrama about a mother's fight to save her son's life, or a polemic about the rights of westerners against an Asian justice system.

Take the question of Barlow's guilt, for instance. The 'police story' aspect of the narrative always admits that Barlow did what he was accused of – in fact, in the opening episode the viewer actually sees him do it. But in the 'family melodrama', Barbara Barlow (John Chambers) maintains her son's innocence to the last.

In the book which maggotwriters for the real Barbara Barlow<sup>1</sup>, a story is told which explains her apparently perverse insistence on her son's innocence. In summary, Kenya did go to Malaysia to collect drugs, but he did not meet the owner, and was on his way home again, completely ignorant of the drug business in the new culture by his casual companion Chambers, when he was stopped by Malaysian Customs officials with a bag which he rightly claimed belonged to his travelling companion. No wonder then that this story strikes a reader incredulously, it does provide Barlow with a justification for her insistence on her son's innocence. The melodrama, on the





other hand, does not allow this possibility, and so leaves the character of Barbara Belvoir in an impossible position: despite John Christie's best efforts, the Barbara Belvoir of the mini-series is presented still and sternly and irrational, without either love or hate.

There is a similar problem with the film *Bad Angels* [see A City on the Devil]. In John Bryson's book, the ultimate question of the guilt of the Chamberlains is left open, despite the overwhelming weight of circumstantial evidence which leads a reader inexorably to the conclusion reached by the writer. Fred Schepisi's film, however, maintains Lindy Chamberlain's version of the story and, once the viewer has seen the drug king the last, the rest of the film is almost superfluous at this point, when we are shown, without it, it drifts from being a mystery story and becomes instead a study of the willful perversion of innocence.

Dramatic subtlety is lost along with moral ambiguity: the story is reduced to a simple confrontation between good and evil. This is not necessarily a bad thing, as in the case that film becomes a first rate melodrama, the problem comes with the decision by the filmmakers and by most of the critics that this is what they are actually dealing with now, rather than with realistic drama.

In the case of *A Long Way from Home*, the moral confusion leads not simply to a shift of register, but rather to an involved contradiction between different strands of the story, preventing the narrative from settling down to be (unambiguously) fish, (a numerous/legally dubious) food or good (wholefood) red herring.

It need not have been this way. True, the guilt of Belvoir and Chamberlain prevents them from ever being any more than, at best, flawed heroes. And yet, by making their guilt so obvious, Kerby prevents the character of Barbara Belvoir from functioning as a clear moral centre of the narrative. But despite all this, there is still one viable narrative perspective available: the debate around the legal aspects of the story. And it need not have had the racial overtones which it was in fact supplied with.

Once the narrative has elected to depict Belvoir and Chamberlain as guilty, and to leave the viewer in no doubt of that, then the focus of dramatic interest naturally shifts to the process of capture, trial and punishment. There were a number of possible routes through this area. The differences between national criminal codes, and the problems of the rights of foreign citizens within the legal system—the courts and goals—of another country, are real problems. Equally significant are questions of the possibility of buying justice. Belvoir

indicates that he has been offered a good break if he can raise the money. But the ultimate, and most important, question is capital punishment, and specifically the death penalty for drug running.

It is at this point that the mini-series fails disappointingly into an emotional muddle—focusing on the horrors of the physical process of hanging and on the family's pain—instead of confronting head-on those important moral and social issues.

Is society even justified in claiming the death penalty? If so, which crimes is it to apply? Is it intended as a punishment for the guilty party or as a deterrent to others? And is it an effective deterrent anyway?

How can crimes associated with the drug traffic be measured against other crimes committed particularly horrific in our society, offences like child molestation? The final credits say that 82 people have been hanged under the particular Malaysian law. Is it reasonable to ask: How effective, then, has that law been as a deterrent? How far are the drug cartels—the lowest ranks of the drug industry—being made to act as scapegoats for society's malaise, co-opted with those who employ them as carriers and make the really big money out of the traffic?



These are significant moral questions that could have been (as they have been in other film and television programmes) the basis for great drama. And it is here that I disagree with Terry Hayes. He asserted that the problem was that Starlow and Chambers were guilty – and of a crime that has little sympathy in the general community. I consider that, in fact, the story of Starlow and Chambers offers to a writer a kind of safe or comforting space of the issues surrounding capital punishment.

To date again close on a film analogy, *Once Was Coming* to *Bitter* (Stanley Kramer, 1957) has been frequently criticised for presenting a sanitised picture of racism, by depicting the prospective son-in-law as Sidney Porter – charming, handsome, well-educated and with a good income in a respected profession. But to have done anything else would have been to muddy the waters, to provide the prospective parents-in-law with some other excuse than racism for their reluctance to accept him into the family. If it is Sidney Porter, then it is racism.

Similarly, to provide an innocent heroine facing the death penalty (Kat (Nicole Kidman) in *Bangkok Hilton*), or to create sympathy for the guilty through diminished responsibility (Mandy and Billy), is to allow the viewers in out on the moral issue. In these cases, the penalty is obviously unjust, and the viewer can come away feeling morally outraged. But the issue has been soft-circuited: a miscarriage of justice, it does not approach the core of the problem that moral pacification for such a penalty is the first place. Of course, it would have taken an experienced writer for writing school to have coped with that issue without alienating a large section of the audience. So many Australians are fiercely committed to the support of capital punishment, or have so little sympathy with drugs that in the case of drug runners, they are willing to ignore their scruples over the death penalty. I can only regret that the story did not find writers equal to that challenge.

So, the dramatic impact of *Bangkok Hilton* is a result, not only of technical effectiveness (the skill of the cast, scene and techniques) but also of the fact that Hayes knew what he was doing: constructing a family melodrama around the myth of persecuted innocence, and he did it well.

Unlike other narrative forms, the goal of the family melodrama is not necessarily the establishment of a heterosexual couple – certainly not in this case, where Kat's parents allow the mother to be separated, and Arbie (Jerrine Ehlers) turns out to be a man merciless, quite willing to sacrifice Kat. Instead, the narrative aims at the reconsolidation of the damaged family, following the reconciliation of Hal Stanton (Denzel Washington) with his brother after a break of over twenty years, and the final reunion of Hal and Kat as father and daughter. This resolution of family issues is less problematic than in some of the other Kennedy Miller stories, including *The Dremers* (Dwight and Venessa).

Myths explain the world to us. They not only describe what is happening around us, but also why it is happening – the gods are smiling, or they are angry and must be placated by a sacrifice. In *Bangkok Hilton*, the primary mythos is that of persecuted innocence: the gods demanded a certain amount of sacrifice, but allowed the final resolution of justice, both through Kat's escape and through the arrest of Arbie Began.

The audience had seen this (family melodrama) form and these myths (of persecuted innocence) many times. They were also familiar, if not through direct experience then indirectly through other representations (including film and television representations), with the aspects of the real world that were woven through the story – a world of drugs, of easy travel for women into Asia, of sexual



predation. Haynes and myth fit comfortably together.

*A Long Way from Home* deals with these myths and these realities too, but less expertly, failing to recognise (let alone resolve) the conflict it sets up between them. But, most significantly, it fails to take advantage of the opportunity offered by its lead character's guilt to confront, at least in part, some of the greater social issues of our time: the death penalty, and the economic and social base of the drug traffic. Terry Hayes hasn't done this either. I wonder who of our current crop of writers might be able to tackle it?

#### MOTIE

1. "Green Guide", *The Age*, 2 November 1989, p.1.
2. These arguments about narrative structure do not relate in any way to the other arguments in this paper, about the progression, about the relation to the terms of the review upon which it is based.
3. Barbara Starlow (as told to Barbara Gally and Richard Shepard), *A Long Way from Home: A Mother's Story*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1988.
4. *The Weekend Australian*, 27-28 September 1988, p.2.

# PETER GREENAWAY

INTERVIEWED BY BRIAN McFARLANE

**A**FTER A CAREER as a painter and maker of obfuscatingly eccentric short films, British director Peter Greenaway leaps to prominence with that equally preposterous *The Draughtsman's Contract*.

The anarchic laquidity of his dialogue and the exhilarating musical score that worked in tandem with the flow of narrative usual in urge to keep up an attack on an audience which was both reflexive and recursive. Not, one might have thought, the stuff of commercial success, but that is exactly what it did enjoy.

Since then, Greenaway has gone on to make four more features *A Zed and Two Noughts*, *The Belly of an Architect*, *Breaking the Waves* and *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife and Her Lover*. In a production record most usually associated with the mainstream than with the art house brigade.

*The Cook, the Thief, His Wife and Her Lover*, according to Greenaway, is a metadrama. It is an extemporaneous but impossible talk act in a restaurant where it is appropriate that all things should be eaten, if only exponentially.

"It is a love story between the Wife (Helen Mirren) of the Thief (Michael Gambon) and Her Lover (Alan Howard). The Cook (Richard Bohringer) owns a large restaurant called Le Hollandais after the large Dutch painting ("Banquet of Officers of the St George Cross Guard Company") by Frans Hals, 1616] of a dining party that is being on to all and other whom the Thief and his gang need derivatives. The setting is an anonymous French, the action starts in the 1980s and the restaurant could be situated in any large city in Western Europe or North America."

Although it is a rich and complex film, *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife and Her Lover* is also your most accessible. How do you feel it compares in narrative difficulty with your earlier films?

This is still very recognisably a Greenaway film: the same sort of metaphorical language, the same sort of eccentric characters

which make you feel as if you're always watching a film and not doing anything else. It's not a slice of life, not a window on the world, it is certainly an artifice.

However, I can understand why the question is so often asked because the film has a lot more passion, more emotive association between an audience and a screen. There are many reasons for that. Basically, my concern likes to address the fact that the only legitimate relationship between a film and its audience does not have to be an emotional one. I scored this off as a painter and I have always been very aware that when you stand in front of a painting you do not cry. You don't fall around on the floor in laughter, crying your eyes out or jumping up and down in anger. It is a different sort of approach, one much more to do with contemplation, with form and surface as well as with content. I have always tried to get these sorts of relationships into my cinema.

I have always enjoyed those artifices which make the work, not only in terms of the cinema but also novel-writing, painting and all the other arts. I believe believe that audiences have an attitude towards cinema which does not necessarily correspond to the dominant Hollywood influence. So, I have always used all sorts of distancing devices - quite obvious things like no use of close-ups, very little editing, a concern with static frames and complex soundtracks, and so on. All those characteristics are still present in *The Cook, the Thief*, but what has happened is has legitimised for myself a much stronger emotional use of the content in terms of the inclemencies, the setting, the violence and the sexual passion. I have allowed these to well up through the other concerns to make a film which a lot of people have found contains them in the traditional Hollywood fashion.

There's one major reason why I have done this. The film is a very angry one. The political situation that currently exists in Great Britain under Mrs Thatcher is one of incredible sense of self-hatred and greed. Society is beginning to worry terribly about the price of everything and the value of nothing, and there is a way in which *The Cook, the Thief* is an emblem of a consumer society, personified in the



Theif, Albert Spitz. He is a man who is thoroughly despicable in every part of his character. He has no redeeming features, and is consumed by self-interest and greed.

However, I don't wish the film to be seen particularly as an anti-Thatcherite essay. It also has horrific qualities which can be understood from *Tierra* to *Tierra del Fuego*, from *Adios Abuela* to *Madagascar*. In a film which I hope works on a more personal level, as well as in terms of late-1980s British politics and social conditions, which have much wider overtones.

What was your aim in establishing so firmly the connection between eating and sexuality, which is one of the film's central motifs?

That is, of course, an old connection. On a really basic level, and in Darwinian terms, the reproduction facilities of the human body, and the procreativity of the human spirit, have very much come from the digestive tract, as an anatomical examination of the fetus will indicate. As well, sex and the hunger for food are, in a peculiarly metaphorical way, intimately related.

This film is a very physical one. It is based on a large series of ideas, one of the most important being a concern for Jacobean English drama, the drama that comes directly after Shakespeare. In fact, late Shakespearean plays are often described as Jacobean. They examine very harsh realities, often taboo subjects, matters which are

sometimes regarded as being on the edges of our experience. Western literature and cinema, at times extreme situations to throw light on more ordinary situations.

The extreme situation in this film is cannibalism. Very rarely do we come up against it very rarely: a small plane goes down in what's left of the Amazonian forest, the pilot eats the passengers or vice versa. So, it is a peripheral event. We have no doubt some sense of *fin de siècle* horror at the idea, but it is forgotten quickly. And, by and large, the Sun and religion no longer provide cannibals

What I wanted to do was take that situation and use it both literally, for the ending of the film, and metaphorically. Imagine there is a huge mouth at the back of the screen into which everything is being pushed. Also consider the idea that all of us are very small children, exploring the world with our mouths. There is a way in which the ultimate obscenity of the consumer society, when we have eaten up everything, is that we turn and eat one another.

Of course, that idea is used with great irony. After all, the concepts of the film are absolutely preposterous, although nothing is really impossible or improbable, except perhaps for the ending. I didn't mean the sexual cannibalism, the eating of meat into the mouth, but Albert Spitz's being killed; it isn't possible to eradicate evil so easily.

The dialogue, which is not particularly conversational but quite



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"Most cinema, and certainly the dominant American cinema, deals with people essentially as personalities, with psychological cause and effect. I am very concerned to not only do that, but also concern myself with them as being a body, an object, a bulk, a form, a shape, something that throws light, makes the floorboards creak, indicates volume."<sup>2</sup>

irony and metaphorical, is also about extremes of human behaviour. For example, a small boy is tortured by being forced to pass faeces into his mouth; there's the gross paedophilia of the father that makes the woman's mouth and goes into her cheek, and there's the very strong beginning of the film when the man is forced to eat dog shit. There is also the suggestion that the scope of sexual pleasure, in the conversations between the Niki and the Cook, is associated with faeces. As constantly there are references to the mouth and to being fed with all sorts of objects, and not necessarily with those that are nutritious.

Another preoccupation your films have in common with Jacobean drama is the connection between sexuality and danger. Is this something of which you are conscious?

Yes, indeed. In *The Clock*, *Die Zeit* was especially concerned with the great physicality of things. Jacobean drama is very physical: the body is the creature, an object which bleeds and has hair, spine, veins, skin and sense. The body is seen very much as an image of an extraordinary causal web composed around web flesh.

Most cinema, and certainly the dominant American cinema, deals with people essentially as personalities, with psychological cause and effect. I am very concerned to see only that, but also concern myself with them as being a body, an object, a bulk, a shape, something that throws light, makes the floorboards creak, indicates volume. Consequently the characters are choreographed, very carefully in these big, fixed empty spaces of the restaurant, the kitchen, and so on.

There are several reasons for the interest in the physiology of these creatures. There have been 2000 years of image-making, and the centre of that image-making has always been the human figure. Painting doesn't deal with personalities, it deals with figures. For example, one of the central images of all European painting is that Woodstock, naked, very physical body of Christ, has taught those sorts of physicalities into my creative practice.

There is a contrast between, on the one hand, the sheer beauty of colour, lighting and composition, and, on the other, the ferocious ugliness of much of the story.

Again, that is characteristic of all my stories. There are lots of ways I could draw that. Maybe the most basic is: Why should the devil have all the best names?

There is a macabre-like feeling in *The Cook, the Thief, his Wife and their Son*, a semi-nudified body which is covered in an extraordinary glass of clotted cream, lathered hair and the sort of thing. It is as though there is an attempt to try and hide the human, the despair, the sense of violence and hurt that's contained only just underneath. The very title of the film indicates the surfaced parable or fable, as does the very cruel ending. And the four characters are set up to be early representatives of certain states and certain virtues.

There is also the way in which I use colour coding to draw attention to the artificiality of the subject. The film opens with curtains and closes with curtains, as if saying, "You are about to watch a performance."

One of the amazing characteristics of cocaine is you can every now and again be sucked completely into the illusion, but I can't



really are devours. For example, when the Wits walk from one room to another, his clothing changes, which immediately brings you up sharp. It's entirely non-reality; it is an artifact which I hope is well wrought, well organized and artful-sounding. Even though you are watching actors behaving like human beings, the film has a very allegorical, metaphorical sense which underwrites the illusions and makes you realize you are sitting in a dark space, watching a beam of light project shadows on a screen.

I have often been accused by those people who do not like my cinema, and there's a great many of them, of overconcerning myself with what might be described as large subject matter. English cinema is very parochial, often dealing with very local, particular, or cyclical situations. My interests are much more to do with the European cinema of ideas, which is quite prepared, maybe amazingly, no take on 'big' ideas. And these also, which follow through from The Thompson's Contract, and, indeed, from before, no take with the consciousness of consciousness and mortality.

Most citizens have basically two subject matters: sex and death. In the 1980s and '90s, we think we have some knowledge of and control over sex, but we will never have any control over death. All my films address that situation, in terms of irony and black humour. Sometimes they are horrific, sometimes very flippan, but always the central issue is death.

Another subject matter, which is a very local one, and which makes my film very much a part of the latter half of the 20th Century, is the idea that the world is a most magnificent, wonderful, surprising, weird place. The surfaces of my films, from *The Disembodied Counterparts*, are very baroque. They use every device I can think of to underscore the richness and magnificence of the world, but always with – and again I’m often accused of this – the central characters behaving in a manner that’s way off. If you want to extract some meaning from this, it is that the world is a most wondrous place but people are completely ploddingly stupid. *The Cook, the Thief* is just another example of this.

To go back to the colour coding and the Mif's customs changes, is the notion of the singing boy also a distancing device? It comes as a shock that the beautiful voice is not just on the soundtrack, but belongs to a character, and revealed by the track through the kitchen.

film. Mostly it is because I feel that the great works of European culture which I admire most are those which balance content and formal, which always acknowledge their own artificiality. For example, the Sistine Chapel is not just a magnificent evocation of Christian and Jewish mythology but it's also very much a powerfully artificial organisation. Equally, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is a play about the theatre, Rembrandt's "The Night Watch" a painting about painting.

This duality, between form and content, will always be part of my filmmaking. But it is something which can be subversive, which can put people off with their knowledge and intellectual endeavour.

Your features are beautifully composed and lit. What sort of working relationship do you have with your superb director of photography, Sacha Viengsay?

Sacha, who has worked with me since *A Bed and Two Nightingales*, is about 25 years old. He has a long history which goes back to associations with people like Jean Cocteau. Probably his most famous role having worked with Alain Resnais, whose movies I regard as the main inspiration of European cinema. But Sacha has also worked with Luis Buñuel – they made *Balladjourne* together. So, he's a man of enormous cinematic experience.

Sacha is very modern and reliable, and would certainly stand any sort of public criticism. He has an enormous amount of imagination and commitment to his work. His English is not absolutely amazing and my French is even worse, but we do seem to be able to communicate very successfully.

Also very important are my Dutch collaborators in the art department, Ben van Os and Jan Rosfill. We have made three features together, and are about to embark on another. They have this tremendous excitement about what they do.

My films are made very cheaply. *The Cook, the Thief* was made for just over a million pounds, which is extraordinarily cheap. Apart from Sacha, Ben and Jan, the most important figure is my producer, a Brazilian named René Ruyalar. He manages to draw the money together from various European sources. Then, through all sorts of cleverness and devices, he is able to make that money stretch so that we can make the very full, professional-looking and rich movies that you see on the screen.

Have all your features been European co-productions?



*The Draughtsman's Contract* was a collaboration between the British Film Institute and the newly opened Channel 4. And everything that I have done since has been very generously helped and aided by Channel 4 – except, that is, for *The Cook, the Thief*. They drew the line on that one. After the first reading of the script, they got very over-excited and said they couldn't possibly make a movie like this.

I feel *The Cook, the Thief* is very much in the European tradition which relates to *Banquo and Fleance*, of films which take risks, which are deliberately, and I hope not sensationally, because that's cheap, to be provocative, in order to set up speculations about areas which need to be explored. It is a very adult cinema.

The violence, for example, unrelaxed. Death, in the American sense of violence. By and large, that is a very transparent, romantic kind of vision of violence, where the characters get up the next frame and walk off. The violence in my film has a sense of responsibility. All of us know how appalling violence can be observed in every step. Of course, my approach can be misunderstood, and some people have accused me of being as gratuitous as Rambos. I strenuously deny that.

*The Cook, the Thief* is a film that sets out to shock, but with moral questions being set up. At the same time, it entertains the audience. That makes it a provocative and exciting experience.

Quite. Responses are relative to the everything; there's a sense of the stretch mark to it.

Of course, the same film could have been made with grisly characters in a transport cafe on some arid coastal road. It could belong much more to the realms of art, without the use of misleading cinematic language. Such a film, of course, would be completely different.

There is in my film a concern for picture making, for the formality and the artificiality of it, which emerges when happening on the screen. This may be a little unusual in terms of the world cinema, but given it is an extra sort of category, an extra strength, it moves the whole on away from your transport cafe into some more grandiose and grandiloquent style of image-making, which again refers to the use of European painting.





PHOTOGRAPH BY JACQUES VILLE / AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE (PHOTO COURTESY OF THE FILM FESTIVAL, THE COOK AND THE CHIEF) (OPPOSITE PAGE) (PHOTO COURTESY OF THE FILM FESTIVAL, THE COOK AND THE CHIEF)

loss, there is no soft-focus feel to it, really or metaphorically. It is a harshly grabbed, rasped, difficult affair which, while obviously flavoring rice and fish in the space of four or five days.

There are all sorts of ironies as well, a man who's supposed to be passionately interested in literature, but never speaks until it's too late, a woman doesn't declare her affection again until it's too late. *The Cook* seems a very, benign presence. Is there a positive feeling induced in him that the film needs?

Yes. He is the director in some sense, the organizing principle. He is the one who invites the chef to come and sit at the round table, the same way a film director invites the audience in at the cinema. He is the one who sits at the table opposite you, short hair, offers you the same suggestion he's been on today and, ultimately, provides the song for the scene—and the principle of the kitchen for the loves. He ultimately agrees to the Wife's suggestion to offer the demolition, the final organization, of the film.

The Cook is also the figure which doesn't take too strong a moral position. In the early part of the film, he could make arrangements to create trouble for the uppity *Thief* (and for the restaurant), but

Somewhere in the imagery we know very well the appalling situation could be changed and the world constantly look like this magnificent imagery. In a very positive sense, it does not have to be constantly dragged down by the appalling greed, lust and will to power, which seems to be the norm of a lot of western consumer society.

And which is here embodied in the character of Albert Spina. But why did you want to make *Spina*? A figure of such unmitigated evil? Surely you risk alienating an audience with no understandable passion at the centre.

This is the pleasure of evil, and goes right back to Shakespearean drama. When Laurence Olivier impersonated Richard III, he made that terrible, evil character peculiarly and dangerously attractive. Somehow we admire the evil.

It happens time and time again. We love clichés like, "Love to hate" J.R. *Swingin' in Dallas*, for example, virtually made that programme, because people watched on the television in order to love to hate the appalling man.

On moral grounds, this is reprehensible. So I tried to create a character whom they could not happen. Here you find, amoral and megalomaniac man, who tortures children and bathes women. All of which come from people we feel are like this. They are extremely dangerous people, and ultimately must be eradicated and destroyed. Not that I think they should be killed, but there should be ways and means whereby we can combat that evil.

Does the feeling between the Wife and the Lover represent for you the one great positive in a nihilistic world?

The love affair does energize and organize everything else that happens in the film, even those appalling things towards the end of the film. But this affair is regarded in a very unromantic, unromantic, unadorned, un-Hollywood approach. The facts of the case are obvious. It is a very unnatural love affair.

It begins very much as a sexual affair, rather than a romance.

Yes, and ends toward something much more valuable. Nonethe-



he doesn't. He observes, constantly watching and occasionally reading the characters into certain sorts of situations.

He is also keen on his art.

Indeed, which again is reflective of the particular film director. *The Cook* is a perfectionist, a man who tries to find, in little speeches of course, a metaphorical parallel between what he does as a cook and a philosophical examination of his particular art relative to everything else. When he describes the ways and means in which the food is cooked, he goes on talking about black being representative of that, and so on.

The most ambiguous character is Giselle (Lia Smith). What do you want to suggest with her?

She is rather ambiguous. In terms of the written script, Giselle had a much bigger part but, to make a film that is only two hours long, some of her lines have been cut.

# JACK CLAYTON

BY N E I L S I N Y A R D

**T**HE RELEASE last year of *The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearst* (1988) is a good occasion to take stock of one of the most enigmatic careers of post-war British cinema, that of director Jack Clayton.

Thirty years ago, after the international success of *Room at the Top* (1959), he was being widely credited with bringing realism, the working class and even sex to the British screen. Twenty years ago, shortly after *Our Mother's House* (1967) had gone down at the Venice Festival like a lead balloon, Andrew Sarris was writing him off, along with David Lean, as the epitome of academic impersonality in screen direction. Since then he has made only three films in two decades – *The Great Gatsby* (1974), *Something Wicked This Way Comes* (1983) and *Judith Hearst* – and has become one of those curiosities of British cinema, like Terence Dickinson or Lindsay Anderson, whose career has never had any real continuity and who has never really seemed to belong. Perhaps this reticence and frustration was what induced him to *Judith Hearst*, with its rootless, frustrated, fuming "Things are going to be better here than the other places... a new start... I say the houses near the beginning of the film. It could be Clayton himself talking, returning to the British cinema after a generation's absence.

Sarris might have been contemptuous of Clayton's gifts, but he does fulfil one of Sarris' basic criteria of a good director: namely, someone who has made a fair proportion of good films. Of Clayton's seven movies, I think only one is the classic: his *ancestor* – *The Great Gatsby* (1974) – but if the others fall short, some at least have cult status: *The Purple Rose* (1964), for pumping Amazonian-esque rage into the plodding checks of English domestic melodrama; *Something Wicked* for raising the terror of early Disney; *Our Mother's House* for its belatedly bitter attempt at a British *Redeemer* (which, I think, has a certain fascination with the rituals of death). Of *The Great Gatsby*, I will only recall shruggy thirties-like comment by a judge that Tennessee Williams pronounced it to be greater than the novel. If Sarris could not grant Clayton the accolade of *ancestor*, Williams was happy to describe him as an *artist*.

Clayton is not an enfant of the 1960s, though nowadays

that would not distinguish him from most others. All his films have been based on reputable or classic novels, and his attitude to adaptation has been similar to that of John Huston (for whom he worked as associate producer on *Moby-Dick* and *Reefer Madness*); a belief that the trick is to let the material dictate the style rather than impose one's personal style on the material. This is not to deny that Clayton has a distinctive style, or to suggest that there is a lack of recurring preoccupation in his work. But if the style is the man, then Clayton is an elusive character. Indeed, his own originality is in the obliqueness of his borrowings, from Jean Cocteau to George Stevens, from Ross Clément to Alfred Hitchcock.

If one examines his first decade as a director, from his Oscar-winning short *The Baptist's Overcoat* in 1953 to *Our Mother's House* in 1963, the film that most looks like his odd man out is his most successful, *Room at the Top*. Clayton was never cut out to be the Angry Young Man of the British cinema: for a start he was building, pushing, 40, and had been working quite largely in the industry since he was 16 – so the fluctuating film strike's contemptuous nerve of rebellion and revolution was entirely alien to him. "I don't believe in being fashionable", Clayton was soon saying. "Try to be and you are usually out of date before you start." Ironically, *Room at the Top* made him very fashionable for the only time in his career, but it is also the film of his that has disappeared most. For all the fun that was made at the time over the love scenes between Laurence Harvey and Shirley Anne Field, it is nevertheless thickey, even in comparison with the fleshyness of *Films Harem* however, which was trying a following. It was nowhere near as daring or revolutionary a film as Michael Powell's *Peeping Tom* (1960), which was being made around that time and was to be greeted by the British press with scandalised revulsion.

Although the film is a big improvement on a stodgy novel, the portrait of the working-class hero, Joe Lampton, was scarcely authentic enough to cause D H Lawrence any twinges of envy, and Laurence Harvey's strangled performance was soon to be upstaged by the raw conviction of Albert Finney in *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955). Also some of the direction – like the dissolve from the shot of a key to a love scene, or the ran-





DIRECTOR JACK CLAYTON, LEFT, ON THE SET OF  
AMERICAN ACTRESS DEBORAH KERR AND LUCY (DEBORAH KERR)  
AND CLAUDIO SIMONE (SIR ARTHUR RACKHAM) IN CLAYTON'S FILM AT THE TOP

most when Lampson sets a boy over upstairs and is reminded of his late love's crash – made even Basil Driscoll look subtle.

You did have elements in it that were to become future Clayton fingerprints. One was the theme of social class, which he was also to deal with in *The Great Gatsby*. Like Gatsby, *Room at the Top* is enigma and the reason why rich girls should not marry poor boys. However, the immediate comparison goes back to the film version of *Gatsby* but *A Place in the Sun* (1951), the adaptation of O'Brien's *An American Tragedy* made by the great George Stevens (who would have been the ideal director for a film of *Gatsby*). *Room at the Top* has the qualities of the me and even conservative version of the Stevens film: the extraction of rich girl and poor boy, the death of the gallant-hearted woman, the end of love and the erosion of money. Equally striking was the similarity of styles Clayton deployed out of Stevens' more pronounced stylized characteristics: the use of quarter-spans on the soundtrack (for example, the way Lampson's swaying, elaboration at counterpointed with an overheard conversation about Alice's death), and, particularly, the use of the dissolve, a relatively rare cinematic device three days which has become Clayton's most visual signature – for purposes of mood and atmosphere, and for the linking of past and present, or vice versa, into a continuum of felt time.

Around the time of *Room at the Top*, however, a fellow filmmaker was commenting much more than Clayton's signature in the film was not the dissolve – it was Somerset Maugham. It was her strong, as Clayton's director, that gave the film its heart. Certainly her poignant performance (as the wife who has an affair with Lampson only to be pushed aside for material ambition) is the aspect of the film that stands up best today, yet much of the credit for it should also go to the director. Maugham, certainly thoughtful in his autobiography, described Clayton as a "marvellous" director who, without throwing his weight around, "knew exactly what he wanted" and what he wanted was "true and

right" (After working with Clayton on *Our Mother's House*, Dirk Bogarde – never one to suffer fools gladly – was to be similarly appreciative.)

Clayton's performance was to provide a clue to Clayton's personality as a director, notably as an acute psychologist of female feeling. Even on the evidence of his small body of films, one could still argue the case for his inclusion in the handful of great directors of women in the history of British film. In addition to Maugham, Anne Bancroft is splendid in *The Pumpkin Eater* and Maggie Smith's subtle assertiveness in Judith Beineke's robust performance in the Merchant-Ivory production *A Room With a View* (1985); by comparison, to a ragbag of mimesmas. Deborah Kerr is simply sensational in *The Adamses*, underlining her customary decorous dispensation in a forest of emotion; the same and the nymphomaniac of her usual screen persona have never seemed more closely aligned.

The things that link all these film-makers is the sense of frustrated passion. They are all emotionally generous personalities, constantly subtle but inwardly unsure, who commit themselves to a relationship that will be unfulfilled. Like David Lean, Clayton makes films about threatened or unrequited love. Romanticism abhors the flagrant acts of repression and the result is often fire-slowdown and drama. Myrna (Karen Black) in *The Great Gatsby* belongs also to this gallery of vulnerable women.

I am not one of those who saw in Clayton's *Elia of Gatsby* an insight it is hardly allowed. It is apparently decorated and conveys the difference of the period much better than its energy. For once, his gift with increased drama has, like Peter Bogdanovich's in *Goodbye, Darkness* (1977), paradoxically done more to seem very dramatic. Francis Ford Coppola's叙述 more playfully than everything else makes *Elia of Gatsby* an American story. Gatsby is not only a précis of Charles Foster Kane (a equally unhappy personification of the promise and beauty of the American Dream), of Rock in *Gas-Blow* (a mysterious, possibly mysterious past, an incongruous relationship) but, even of Coppola himself (dreams of money and success, achieved not through bootlegging in his case, but through running the Mafia). In the disastrous first of Clayton's real English temperament turns it all to stone.

Yet the selection of Clayton as director was not a foolish one and certainly made more sense at the time than the selection of other English directors for classic American subjects like J. Lee Thompson for *Monkey Business* (1974) or John Schlesinger for *Days of the Locust* (1972). I have mentioned the class theme that relates it to *Room at the Top* and gives some power here from the contrasting photographic texture derived for the Gatsby-Baby romance and the Myrtle-Tom subplot, which uses grain-films. Gatsby about "living too long with a single dream" and the quality of the dream and the fail of the dreamer is a question shared in Clayton's films. Characters either sacrifice their dreams out of ambition or greed, like Lampson or Derry, or fulfil their deepest dreams and then have to confront their worst nightmares, as in something like *What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?* (1962) or *Something Wicked This Way Comes*. The dead Missus of *Something Wicked* is stirred up by Mr Dark for "messing other men's dreams", i.e., unmasking himself in books, rather than in life, and which now has him drowning in a sea of largely. The foolish wife in *The Pumpkin Eater* accused of "living in a dream world" when she is horrified by revelations of her husband's supposed infidelity. Characters like her, and like Gatsby, and the



Macbeth in *Something Wicked* sometimes seem too trusting and idealistic for the real world, which makes the encounter between their essential innocence and the world's corruption all the more shocking.

Virtually, the most moving moment of disillusionment in his work probably occurs in *Our Mother's House*, when an impressionable young girl (Frances Tomelty) becomes an unsettling figure, her alter-ego after 'father' is shattered and the screen is suffused with a hazy shade of sexual scepter. This fascination with innocence and experience might explain Clayton's capacity for comparing remarkable performances from children in films like *Our Mother's House*, *The Pumpkin Eater*, *Something Wicked This Way Comes* and, especially, *The Bentovers*. "I adore working with children," he has said, "because they embody my concept. It is really 'pure' direction. It brings out the best in me."

*The Bentovers* is the film that has so far brought out the best in Clayton. The ambiguity and suggestiveness of Henry James' ghost story, *The Turn of the Screw*, where the horror is conceived through psychological implication rather than physical shock, are a real

challenge to the filmmaker's imagination and Clayton rises to it magnificently, in a style that seems partly inspired by the haunted poetry of *Baan en de Boot* (1948) by Cocteau. The ghosts are solid figures, the man they glimpsed briefly through mist on a tower, the lady (in perhaps Clayton's most haunting single image) seen across a lake or an armful that beeps in an amorous sadness. The evidence of their visitations is limited to a single tantalising trace: a teardrop on a blossoming pink rose, like 'Roseleaf', disappears almost as suddenly as it materialises. In Clayton's rendering, the story becomes a trenchant critique of Victorian attitudes, in which the preservation of 'innocence' (in this case, an authoritarian protection of children from sexual knowledge) is the product of a representationalism that could be rechristened hypocrisy and falsehood. In a pointedly telling touch, Clayton shows the governess reaction to the horror before the audience sees the thing itself, in this way suggesting that it is her egotism that is supplying these visions. It is a brilliantly effective way of being at once faithful to the spirit of Jamesian ambiguity whilst at the same time interpreting rather than simply illustrating the text.

No other film of his is consistently on that level but nearly all of them contain great things. In spite of the curiously magisterial Harold Pinter screenplay for *The Pumpkin Eater*—as if he were meant to play Scrooge to the novel's Scrooge character—the air with which Clayton compels us to identify with the anguish of Edwina (Anne Bancroft), and the very Gurdjieff-like sense of sexual ambiguity to underline her love of human nature, makes this one of Britain's finest 'woman's pictures'. Gandy has some fine scenes—Clayton is very good at evocative imagery—and some consciously eloquent images, like the dissolve from Dr Eckleburg's all-seeing eye to the broken, blood-stained headlamps of Gandy's car. *Something Wicked* cannot make the chilling work—Clayton is no Spielberg when it comes to awakening that kind of basal apprehensibility—and just





athan Price is hardly innocent in *Mr Dark*, offering lightweight menace when what is needed is the character of a Robert Mitchum in *A Night of the Hunter*. Yet there are scenes such as that which makes the surreal film from the Disney stable seem tame. *Pinocchio* (1940) the fabulous opening shot of the glass train, the turbulent nightmare, and a hunt for the children in the library that culminates in a terrifying shot of the boys as they peer out from their hiding place between the shelves, unaware of the two black-clad, disembodied hands rising like the consciousness of an octopus behind them. Hitchcock would have loved the use of the figure-ground as a symbol of Disneyian chaos, as in *Strangers on a Train* (1951) or a small town's craving for excitement releasing demonic forces, as in *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943). If the film were a commercial disaster, the reason might be that it does not fit its audience too efficiently. Adults would find the puns in the film's exploration of the American fear of the ageing process. As for children, the film, like *Mr Dark*, like the government in *The Friends*, seems capable of frightening them to death.

In fact, the overall impression one has from a cursory survey of Clayton's films is the sense of an unceasingly threatening presence at work. It might not be that *valuable* (as it would certainly be possible to make a *useful/valuable* diagram of Clayton's screen) to relate accusations of impersonality. Theatrically there are the motifs of frustrated parents, domestic failing, giddy women, children, disease, the coexistence of past and present, and an undercurrent of religious hysteria that is particularly evident in *The Assassins*, *The Master's Prayer* (just as *Heaven*, but much less explicitly in *The Purple Rose* [when the heroine involved, an innocent virgin, by a religious fanatic]). Visually and aurally, one can pick up traces of the Chapman signature: the use of dissolves; a fascination with hands; this are either clenched in tension or reaching for contact; a treble-like level of the photographic effects of candlelight, significant use of patterns and patterns; an amplification of sound at moments of high drama and a perverse use of voices and whispers (the children in both *The Assassins* and *Something Wicked* are picked on by their respective spinster teachers for being "whisperers"). The conjoining of these elements across a wide variety of material adds up to a very distinctive world.

Why then has his career been such a following affair? Part of it has to do, of course, with a national film industry seemingly incapable of

assuming continuity. Also Clayton's syntax has always been notable with a popular cinema dedicated to the pursuit of happiness. His films invariably end on a conclusion/basis not pessimistic necessarily but, nearly always sad. Only *Something Wild* conveys a happy ending and it is an embarrased and relaxed slope the whole thing that almost spoils the entire narrative structure. There however been much of a sense of play in Clayton's cinema – an inability to retain is his main failing as a director – and none of his films comes over simply as entertainment. Philip French once said of Robert Bresson that "he was a director, not a film, who would rather be dull than frivolous – and frequently was", and one might apply that, with modifications, to Clayton.

If he has had less than his due from the critics, I think much of that arises from his being among the last ones doing serious work in a time in the 1980s when his kind of well-crafted literary cinema was going out of style. He has never looked like catching up with the canons of the present day. Contemporaries like Karel Reisz, John Schlesinger and Tony Richardson have made strenuous efforts to move with the times, but Gandy-like, Clayton has stayed in tact. "Can't regret the past? Of course you can!" Like many of his characters, he has waited for the past to catch up with him, to come into alignment with his present. Considering the reception given to *The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearst*, a welcome return of the intelligently scripted, well-made, intergenerational sort of drama, maybe his time is back, and deservedly, his career.

## WAGE SLATTED PLEASANT

1855 The Inspector General - short. 1856 Three Men is a Bass -  
prologue 1859 Romeo is the Top 1861 The Innocents 1864 The  
Pumpkin Eater. 1867 Our Mother's House. 1874 The Cross; Gatsby  
1883 Something Wicked this Way Comes. 1898 The Lonely Passion  
of Judith Haze.



# Dirty Dozen

A PANEL OF FILM REVIEWERS HAS RATED TWELVE OF THE LATEST RELEASES ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 10, THE LATTER BEING THE OPTIMUM RATING (A CRITIC MEANS NOT SURE). THE CRITICS ARE: BILL COLLINS (JAMMING, 10); TIM CRAIG (MURKIN, 9); SANDRA HALL (THE PREDATOR, 8); PAUL HARRIS (10); "BO", THE AGE, MELBOURNE; IAN HUTCHINSON (STEVIE NICKERS, THE SAK, MELBOURNE); STEVE JAMES (THE CAPTAIN ADVENTURE, BEN HUPTON (THE AGE); ADRIAN MARTIN (FUSION, MELBOURNE); SCOTT MURRAY; MIKE VAN NICKERK (THE WEST AUSTRALIAN); TOM RYAN (10); THE Sunday AGE, MELBOURNE; PETER THOMPSON (SUNDAY, BEN HUPTON); AND EVAN WILLIAMS (THE AUSTRALIAN, SYDNEY).



PHOTOGRAPH BY STEPHEN COOPER FOR THE AGE

## BACK TO THE FUTURE II

Roxbury Scores

Bill Collins	—	Bill Collins	8
Sandra Hall	—	Sandra Hall	6
Paul Harris	3	Paul Harris	3
Ian Hutchinson	5	Ian Hutchinson	7
Steve James	6	Steve James	4
Neil Jillett	5	Neil Jillett	3
Adrian Martin	8	Adrian Martin	5
Scott Murray	8	Scott Murray	—
Mike van Nickerk	4	Mike van Nickerk	—
Tom Ryan	7	Tom Ryan	9
Peter Thompson	6	Peter Thompson	4
Evan Williams	—	Evan Williams	6

## BLACK RAIN

Roxbury Scores

Bill Collins	8	Bill Collins	—
Sandra Hall	5	Sandra Hall	9
Paul Harris	2	Paul Harris	8
Ian Hutchinson	6	Ian Hutchinson	9
Steve James	7	Steve James	—
Neil Jillett	8	Neil Jillett	6
Adrian Martin	—	Adrian Martin	1
Scott Murray	2	Scott Murray	1
Mike van Nickerk	6	Mike van Nickerk	7
Tom Ryan	5	Tom Ryan	4
Peter Thompson	1	Peter Thompson	9
Evan Williams	6	Evan Williams	9

## BORN ON THE FOURTH OF JULY

Oliver Scores

Bill Collins	9	Bill Collins	—
Sandra Hall	8	Sandra Hall	—
Paul Harris	3	Paul Harris	4
Ian Hutchinson	8	Ian Hutchinson	9
Steve James	8	Steve James	2
Neil Jillett	9.5	Neil Jillett	9
Adrian Martin	1	Adrian Martin	1
Scott Murray	—	Scott Murray	—
Mike van Nickerk	7	Mike van Nickerk	6
Tom Ryan	4	Tom Ryan	—
Peter Thompson	8	Peter Thompson	1
Evan Williams	—	Evan Williams	—

## CASUALTIES OF WAR

Sandra Scores

Bill Collins	—	Bill Collins	8
Sandra Hall	6	Sandra Hall	6
Paul Harris	3	Paul Harris	3
Ian Hutchinson	7	Ian Hutchinson	7
Steve James	4	Steve James	4
Neil Jillett	2	Neil Jillett	2
Adrian Martin	5	Adrian Martin	5
Scott Murray	—	Scott Murray	—
Mike van Nickerk	—	Mike van Nickerk	—
Tom Ryan	9	Tom Ryan	9
Peter Thompson	4	Peter Thompson	4
Evan Williams	6	Evan Williams	6

## CRIMES AND MISDEMEANORS

Woody Allen

Bill Collins	8	Bill Collins	—
Sandra Hall	5	Sandra Hall	9
Paul Harris	2	Paul Harris	8
Ian Hutchinson	6	Ian Hutchinson	9
Steve James	7	Steve James	—
Neil Jillett	8	Neil Jillett	6
Adrian Martin	—	Adrian Martin	1
Scott Murray	2	Scott Murray	1
Mike van Nickerk	6	Mike van Nickerk	7
Tom Ryan	5	Tom Ryan	4
Peter Thompson	1	Peter Thompson	9
Evan Williams	6	Evan Williams	9

## THE DELINQUENTS

Chris Thompson

Bill Collins	—	Bill Collins	—
Sandra Hall	—	Sandra Hall	—
Paul Harris	4	Paul Harris	4
Ian Hutchinson	9	Ian Hutchinson	9
Steve James	2	Steve James	2
Neil Jillett	9	Neil Jillett	9
Adrian Martin	1	Adrian Martin	1
Scott Murray	—	Scott Murray	—
Mike van Nickerk	6	Mike van Nickerk	6
Tom Ryan	—	Tom Ryan	—
Peter Thompson	1	Peter Thompson	1
Evan Williams	—	Evan Williams	—

**JOHNNY HARGOGUE**

WALTER HILL

	A STING IN THE TALE	EVAN WILLIAMS
Bill Collins	-	Bill Collins
Sandra Hull	2	Sandra Hull
Paul Harris	5	Paul Harris
Ivan Hutchinson	7	Ivan Hutchinson
Stan James	-	Stan James
Neil Jilliett	1	Neil Jilliett
Adrian Martin	6	Adrian Martin
Scott Murray	-	Scott Murray
Mike van Niekerk	-	Mike van Niekerk
Tom Ryan	7	Tom Ryan
Peter Thompson	4	Peter Thompson
Evan Williams	-	Evan Williams

**SEA OF LOVE**

HAROLD BROOKS

	WAR OF THE ROSES	EVAN WILLIAMS
Bill Collins	6	Bill Collins
Sandra Hull	7	Sandra Hull
Paul Harris	6	Paul Harris
Ivan Hutchinson	7	Ivan Hutchinson
Stan James	5	Stan James
Neil Jilliett	6	Neil Jilliett
Adrian Martin	8	Adrian Martin
Scott Murray	5	Scott Murray
Mike van Niekerk	6	Mike van Niekerk
Tom Ryan	6	Tom Ryan
Peter Thompson	7	Peter Thompson
Evan Williams	-	Evan Williams

**STEL MAGNOIAS**

HAROLD ROSS

	HOW YESTERDAY	EVAN WILLIAMS
Bill Collins	5	Bill Collins
Sandra Hull	5	Sandra Hull
Paul Harris	1	Paul Harris
Ivan Hutchinson	6	Ivan Hutchinson
Stan James	7	Stan James
Neil Jilliett	7	Neil Jilliett
Adrian Martin	-	Adrian Martin
Scott Murray	-	Scott Murray
Mike van Niekerk	6	Mike van Niekerk
Tom Ryan	6	Tom Ryan
Peter Thompson	4	Peter Thompson
Evan Williams	6	Evan Williams

**A STING IN THE TALE**

EVAN WILLIAMS

	A STING IN THE TALE	EVAN WILLIAMS
Bill Collins	-	Bill Collins
Sandra Hull	2	Sandra Hull
Paul Harris	5	Paul Harris
Ivan Hutchinson	7	Ivan Hutchinson
Stan James	-	Stan James
Neil Jilliett	1	Neil Jilliett
Adrian Martin	6	Adrian Martin
Scott Murray	-	Scott Murray
Mike van Niekerk	-	Mike van Niekerk
Tom Ryan	7	Tom Ryan
Peter Thompson	4	Peter Thompson
Evan Williams	-	Evan Williams

**SEA OF LOVE**

EVAN WILLIAMS

	SEA OF LOVE	EVAN WILLIAMS
Bill Collins	6	Bill Collins
Sandra Hull	7	Sandra Hull
Paul Harris	6	Paul Harris
Ivan Hutchinson	7	Ivan Hutchinson
Stan James	5	Stan James
Neil Jilliett	6	Neil Jilliett
Adrian Martin	8	Adrian Martin
Scott Murray	5	Scott Murray
Mike van Niekerk	6	Mike van Niekerk
Tom Ryan	6	Tom Ryan
Peter Thompson	7	Peter Thompson
Evan Williams	-	Evan Williams

**STEL MAGNOIAS**

EVAN WILLIAMS

	STEL MAGNOIAS	EVAN WILLIAMS
Bill Collins	5	Bill Collins
Sandra Hull	5	Sandra Hull
Paul Harris	1	Paul Harris
Ivan Hutchinson	6	Ivan Hutchinson
Stan James	7	Stan James
Neil Jilliett	7	Neil Jilliett
Adrian Martin	-	Adrian Martin
Scott Murray	-	Scott Murray
Mike van Niekerk	6	Mike van Niekerk
Tom Ryan	6	Tom Ryan
Peter Thompson	4	Peter Thompson
Evan Williams	6	Evan Williams

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## REVIEWS

THE DELINQUENTS, DO THE EIGHT THING, THE ABYSS,  
THE FABULOUS BAKER BOYS, AND A STING IN THE TAIL.



REVIEWED HERE (FROM LEFT TO RIGHT):  
OLIVE MARTIN IN *THE DELINQUENTS*;  
ROBERT DUVALL IN *DO THE EIGHT THING*;  
MARK LEWIS IN *THE ABYSS*;  
CHARLES DICKENS IN *THE FABULOUS BAKER BOYS*;  
AND LINDA RICHARD IN *A STING IN THE TAIL*.

## THE DELINQUENTS

OLIVE MARTIN

**S**ometimes in the pre-publicity for *The Delinquents* kept suggesting to me that I should have *Green Fingers* the cutesy shop in her mind and prepared before the movie even. Perhaps because Edie (Edie Meeks) is a path similar to that of another beloved *Autumn* icon, Olivia Newton-John. For here, in the tantalizing spread of available partners, was Kyle, debuting in a film seemingly carefully calculated to show off her 'vintage' (including her trim pinup) countenance (kudos to Marlene Dietrich's stamp on black leather being mimicked lasciviously at the end by her guy (Charles Schubert)). Although the flaxen beauty has managed to maneuver her from point A (juvenile) to point B (experience), the film promised to be a knowing 'vehicle' (long experience) for Kyle, closing her from one (bold) message to the next. After all, she was also looking on the horizon, her great character name of Linda (returning memories of Linda Lovelace, *The Blue Angel*, or *The Baker's Wife*, or *Bandit's*, or

*Ophelia*) *Lola* Martin. Not to mention that wonderful side (Julien from *Corrie* Robert's source novel, which I have not read) - the perfect, she anticipated term more like, *The Delinquents*, with its connotations of rebellion, independence, sex, distance - promising a summation of the original *Autumn* icon (Miles made a film of the same name in 1952) and these, moreover, romantically charged variants (such as *The Delinquent on Acid*).

Dreadful, dreadful. In the event, there is no *vamp* Kyle with slacks and tank top appearing anywhere in the film - only a girl merely apologizing in her room for 'advertisements' we never see (Lolita, that is, it's a sin to watch the film, which Lolita is often guilty of in the film). Nor is there much sex in it than just a vaguely 'sharing' point - no sex crazed grape in a public dressing room, the flaming exception of Jerry Lee Lewis, an auto-eroticist not in a girl's garment down to the sound of 'Be Bop A Lula' - beyond which, the film is determined to match *Lola* up seriously with a referenced named 'old one', but an immature oldie, with Little Richard's 'Lucille' now trans-

formed from an audience of wild youth to a class, for young suitable wives for young marrieds. The film also attempts to communicate to teenagers older – although Browne (Schlafly) keeps talking about marriage to 'Tim and Pam'. The Delapuente (Julia, see, *Crest Falls of Fury*) is clearly another Agnes (Agnes), a case of an Australian film too scared, or too precious, to become, in its very texture and intention, a literary genre film in a popular genre. (You can tell from the first language/plot/pattern choice that the Baulchberg people that the cast really want to be *The Year of the Fox* strike.)

Okay, maybe it comes with the wrong bag of epics. Let's try another paradigm, one cast by the appearance in the film of a poster for *Housewife* (a Swedish film with Ingrid Bergman) that remarkable work about the fury and ecstasy of a trapped woman, and formidably matched by the roles it actually did happen to teach before *The Delapuente* instead of *Crest*. Visconti's *Murder* (1969 Hollywood version of *Death's Head*)? *Murder* (1969). In *The Delapuente*, in short, a woman's *metabolism* – like many metabolisms of old (Kurtz, for instance, or *Seven* *Seven*), is certainly conformist to the convention whereby the metabolism of both sexes a man and a dramatic character is invested in the female sex – even to the extent of making the male here a bit of a blank (which is no fault of Schlafly's writing; he does what he can). Performance-wise, Marjorie processes still try to do the best of the half-masted knowing of the film on her. And, then...what's, in anything going on?

The comparison to *Murder* becomes a paroxysm or crazy as it might sound, like *Reverie* (Jewell's *Seven*) in *Murder's* film. Lola is first seen performing the right kind of processing photo session a regard for gender impositions (it is this a model of 'natural' behaviour (Lola, of course, would rather practice her finger-waggle)). More particularly than Emma Bovary, Lola is shown in the particularised female version of the themes and images of economic low-cultural/high patriarchal society – the categories everything that happens to her is *Marketing* (Highs and Lows) and *Jobs*, much to the puzzlement of her less culturally inclined friends. If seen in that light, would not the tragic/romanticising of Lola's fate be in the fact that, as a consumer, she is unable to break through to a feminist independence (but, as the contrary, is destined to depend on a man who is forced off on his own greater trip, selling the high end with his symbolic 'good father' (accompanied with appropriate crooniness) by Bruno Lasseter (I)? *The Delapuente* is woman's make-do, trying to resemble a soft culture film of old like *Updike's* *Water from a Broken Window*?

Tough look, scholar. One cannot easily ignore the fact that all are pretense roads, finally, must come to the crushingly consciousness-eroding of the film already mentioned, from which even the slightest hint of irony or insight is singularly lacking. Even discussing the ending the film can be seen as shaking its pretence throughout. On the terms of the woman's metabolism, for instance, the film's ultimate means romantic love, and how it wants to depict it seems very confused. For perhaps a good hold of its existing time, *The Delapuente* takes a decidedly aristocratic, distanced, ornate point of view on Lola's romantic obsessions, counterpointing the first physical fulfilment of the former, or the enlightened remission of an aristocratic man, with sentences like overblown rock 'n' roll romance ballads like 'Only You' (used to far more wistful effect in *The War of the Fleas* and 'Three Steps to Heaven').

As a certain point, however – when Lola is put

in the charge of her response crew – the film changes its stance, and suddenly wants to start investing in positivity in Lola's outcomes of her consumer identities and sexual currency. In the film a notable, or unlikely, mainly enhance all-soporific recuperation seen after Lola's passion or decommission, the film starts making her the 'product' one to the living couple, more invested in 'settling down' than in being free and free. And as for the sex scenes – despite all the 'free' which pur purplicy from the Marjorie Marbury scenes on in being presented as these direct and perfunctory types – the most arousing things in *The Delapuente* is definitely the right and sound of Lola talking about how much she enjoys sex. And, whether this movie is women's melodrama, more talk is simply not enough – it is of good old women's energy and surely required.

It is hard to avoid saying, obviously, that *The Delapuente* is a weakly directed, weakly scripted, and grossly uninteresting Australian film – which is, really, nothing new for mainstream Australian film in the context of a film industry which (at least in the professional training and conference levels) thrives more scrapping and (dis)allowing prescriptions like 'Don't say it when you can show' (as encompasses by many, *The Delapuente* – which completely embodies the mindset of that industry, characterising every young or chosenly emerging voice as inappropriate. Almost without exception, it 'told' rather than 'showed' and 'acted' to good effect – my favorite piece of overstatement, over-ideational dialogue occurs when Lola says, as the film ends, to the bed, 'So you had sex with me?' The film is also not short on passing clichés (which her girlfriend at the bar tries to let her feel neutral), scenes that go nowhere (like the prison visit), and minor characters who have no clear thematic function in the overall sense of the piece (just what is the role of the couple *Bliss* (Steve Reich and Lyle (Todd Bowtell) beyond, respectively, being and shaping) so that Lola can be an *issues* *Issue*?) The film lacks a sense of narrative, symmetry, rhythm, form, and is full of those hideously clichéded motifs of literary criticism, we might

call them – this one is only too powerfully familiar with from the collected works of *Eliza-Gregory* et al, director, a manised well-mechanising exorcist by Angela Pech-McGregor.

The lack of commitment, however *Plummeting* (and accompanying) women shouldn't always automatically bother a viewer, after all, there's always the chance that there might be, even used seriously, something stronger and more material going on in the absence of the assessment of such 'titles'. *The Delapuente*, however, is just one of those failed films requiring a tiny concentration level of 'original' *Plummeting*, which you progressively passively await, waiting from the screen until below the end credits. At such a level not just with regard over its failed potential, or its possible themes, but only asking little questions of the location one's hidden left along in the end of 'commercially' inflected Australian film, *Question* like:

– Why did David Bowie pull one of his (much advertised) performances with the soundtrack? If he had a choice as to what direction might his stage host take in the *Bliss*? Prior facilitation (the music, options, etc.), if any, was encouraged, for whom?

– Did anyone involved in the making of this film ever *Smoked*, before shooting, to which a poster of it up on the set? Do small (but often equally) decisions like the master or meekness Australian filmmakers like more? Did they ever?

**THE DELAPUENTE** Directed by *Clare Thomas*. Produced by *Clare Thomas*, *Brooklynn Alix Coker*, *Michael Wilson*. Executive producer *Christopher Gaze*, *Greg Gaze*, *John Turturro*. Associate producer *Clayton P. Ferguson*. Music supervisor *James Lavelle*. Director of photography *Andrew Lewis*. Sound *Paul Borsari*, *Riley John Scott*. Production designer *Lauren Rasmussen*. Composer *Miles Gooding*. Costumes *Sophie Morgan* (Lola Lasseter). Casting *Debbie Holden* (Dionne Haines). Angels *Angela Pech-McGregor* (Mia Lovell). Drama *Lorraine* (Bliss). Drama coach *Elizabeth (Meredith) Todd* (Bliss). *Stefan Jaffro* (Aunt *Wendy*). *Lynda Corcoran* (Bliss). *Matthew* (Village (assistant production of *Clare Thomas*)). *The Delapuente* Premieres in association with *Statewide Cinemas* October 18. 100 mins. *Motion Australia*.





## DO THE RIGHT THING

MARCO BENE

**T**HERE IS AN INTRINSIC RELATIONSHIP between filmaking and marketing. It is generally taken for granted that major newspapers, radio and television networks, complemented by advertising, will come to consumers the necessary funds whereby those consumers will be motivated to pay to see the film in question.

In the case of *Do the Right Thing*, some of the most remarkable aspects of the film's content (or lack thereof) come from the subject matter and the way it is treated on the screen.

*Do the Right Thing* has had the rare pleasure of surprising that market place anxiety and moving into a controversy zone that challenges the key conventions of media publicity.

But then again Americans are prone to myopia, since film—which is just another way of safely packaging it for the mobile screens of the great consuming audience.

*"Fight the power, fight the power,  
Fight the power that be!"*

When Spike Lee chooses a musical crack like jazz to juxtapose (up over) the small subversive world of Bed-Stuy he has created for *Do the Right Thing*, it is time to take note. But we are already taking notice, because—surprise!—journalists, for the most part, have told us that this is an ordinary film.

Indeed, one will find fundamentally one of the strongest, most uncompromising films to achieve major release in many years. Most strong films are also special, but most films do not reflect audiences in-to-toe of the major contradictions confronting the era. That contradiction is between the desire for racially based independence in a system that cannot offer anything as long as it exists in its present form. In other words, American blacks were to be free of the twin constraints of racism, while enjoying all the benefits of the liberal dreams to which they aspire.

What does the world do when race, ethnicity

and nationality begin to assert themselves like mushrooms popping up through poor needles? In America, Bulgaria, Rhodesia, Lebanon or New York, there are major movements internationally that herald potentially exciting and/or dark days ahead for the planet. They are movements which suggest that society has advanced to the stage where independent ethnic groups can develop the economic, cultural and social autonomy that will enable them to live "free" lives. It should be noted that in the early 1980s, the Spanish Republic recognized the right of Basque-controlled town to decide, while Franco accepted that right as one of his first necessary moves after his coup.

Black Americans are in the mood for nationhood and statehood. They are making moves that Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr., could have only dreamed about. Some contemporary American blacks are laying claim to the national and autonomy of their radical parents, subversive independent social, cultural and economic lives for their children. If all of the resistance imposed by racists/white they are making the movement a contradiction that asks if it is up to date, within or outside the existing white American system of capitalism, or will it even be a capitalist system?

*"Fight the power, fight the power,  
Fight the power that be!"*

In an abstract sense, the movie looks hardly like a revolutionaries, but, to the people living in the lower end of the American system, it is indeed a complicated and complex issue. Using "jazz" here is an ancient African idea, where the conscious and subconscious worlds create unavoidable tension that can often be violently expressed.

That is the beauty of *Do the Right Thing*. It tackles the problem of black politics within the context of black history and white monopoly towards blacks. It prods the subconscious of white parents about black music, and refuses to resolve for people that the opinions of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr., presented.

It is interesting that producer-cinematographer Spike Lee selected a blackhouse, perhaps more preferable, because to continually present photographs of Malcolm X and King Martin Bradley (Roger Guenveur Smith), he parades through that film with his magnification of the two black leaders, here to tell them to shanzenz self pay. His coloration and decoration of the photographs are leading refutes of the uncertain relevance of these men in the late 1980s, suggesting that you make your own interpretations of your history.

Selling and making money is a significant subtitle of the film as well. Economic independence has been an important desire among black Americans intellectuals for many years. It began as far back as the time of the revolutionary Booker T. Washington, argued that, "Business, property and character will be the outcome of civil rights"; while W. E. B. Du Bois saw political power for blacks as being essential, regardless of how it was achieved. It is still a healthy debate.

*Do the Right Thing* is based around Malcolm X (Djimon Hounsou), who operates always against defining planes, calling to black brothers "Comrad", then creating bourgeoisie, while putting off betrayed friends because he has no work. It doesn't seem much, but it is an important and disturbing visual suggesting that work will solve the race problem presented in the film.

While much of the publicity for the film concentrated on its attempt to explore the racism of America and the problems faced by minorities, I do not believe it succeeds this category. It is too diverse, too successful at digging into the real social psyche of minorities to be hampered with simplistic reading.

Spike Lee has gone on record saying that the film did not win the Palme d'Or at that year's Cannes Film Festival because, among other things, judges like German director Wim Wenders preferred to award the prize to "a golden hearted white boy" like Steven Spielberg for *One, One, One*.

Comments like these raise the mind spectre, but, in fact, mostly express the frustration of

DEA HEL (PARENT ASSOC), 1995 (PRINT PREVIEW)  
AND DEA (PRINT PREVIEW) OR OTHER AS FOR THE OTHER  
ENTRIES IN THIS SECTION. SEE ALSO THE INDEX  
PAGE OF THE CONTRABANDISTS INDEX.  
PREDATORY AMERICAN?

Blacksiders who feel that they should reflect the big picture once they make it clear that racism is the top priority. Of course, the racism in such Lee films does not extend to Nazis or Westoids.

More important, he does not need the conventional film industry machinery to project his film because, as previously mentioned, his obscurity is his appeal.

The story-line of *Do the Right Thing* is quite remarkable. There are risks taken here that could be used as examples of bad filmmaking at film-school classes. The static scenes and static sets, the overcooked choice of method acting, the hideous lighting, the overly unrealized dialogue: it all suggests a hasty disregard for narrative film's obligation to the story. More important, it suggests an ambivalence towards Spike Lee's chosen machine.

These are un-suspended images for Spike Lee, no suspension of belief and increasing reductions into abstract drama-super and his friends.

To finally, the film stands and walks like the aged standard *Do Mayor (From Hell)*, from one uncertain day to the next. Lee's determination not to allow any indulgence — however in the path of the difference between *Do the Right Thing*, *Sex, Lies, and Videotape* and other conventional films Spike Lee keeps his audience conscious. Spike (highly Hollywood/conventional) current film theory and practice) drives the audience into the back of its own sleepy brain to dream its dreams.

Spike Lee's filmic machine has the following anti-Hollywood/anti-cinema preoccupations, such as that by the three men in front of the snarled well and their vaguely religious, but different, consciousness, much of the silent acts by Radio Raman (Bill Nunn) until he speaks, and the

entomological content track, such as that in the bedroom and in the house with Mookie's girl friend Tia (Lrose Orman). All content is an inglorious fusion within conventional, feature-film construction.

This mixture of styles evades the film's look, often difficult to work, but always appropriate. Indeed, it appears as an extension of the material not the character, although the Italiano's pants seem to fit perfectly his character roles.

Where Eddie Murphy (in *g... Going to America*, *Harlem Nights*) takes black characters and makes them parodies of the mass-market conception of blacks, Lee carefully avoids such easy strategies. Once the opening takes incorporate a diverse mixture, black women dancing unconvincingly to *Love and Pain* (Public Enemy's "Fight the Power") rap, some wearing boxing gloves. There is nowhere to hide among the stereotypes when faced with this originality.

"Fight the power, fight the power,  
fight the power black!"

Ultimately, Lee uses all the devices for manipulation of spectators to — to throw up in many conflicting and contradictory strata on the screen as is possible today with understanding the unsteady movement of the film. When the movement finally takes us into the drama, in a frenzy of fire bombing that leaves the viewer breathless in rapidly and uncontrollably, there is no sense that Lee has exhausted his repertoire.

Rudy Raimus is murdered by police in front of a mostly black crowd, and Mookie feels, as the good boy family tends to do in the bad bad things makes the movie that brings about the deterioration of Sal's place and his income. He returns to the shop the next morning the harbinger and there is Sal with enough money to cover his bills. Lee will not compromise. He will not make drama but look at that, regardless of who happens, the contrite will come. Blackwell always bought

and by the American free-enterprise system and almost nothing will be gained.

The in-depths essential reading of *Do the Right Thing* (see review of the film, however, mentioned, and that it is an extremely unequal film measured with love by Lee who sees the necessity of the problem for black Americans with exceptional clarity. His rationality will not be appreciated by many people, nor will his appeal to the two major streams of black American history, as reflected in the statements by Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X that close the film.

It is unfortunate that *Do the Right Thing* has been carried with the studio brand, whereby its appeal has been limited to the one/two reading, because it is a much deeper film than such marketing will allow. But it is a film that firmly enters into the domain of the consideration of progress, American.

Because he uses that approach, many people may be unable to cope with Lee's somewhat radicalizing attitude, but there is little doubt that his work is rapidly elevating him to a position alongside some of the great black American intellectuals and writers. It is a position that accurately reflects reality for many people around the world and that is a major accomplishment.

1. Nelson George, *The Death of Blaqee and Blue*, 1995, page 44.

2. Quoted in "Do the Right Thing," Entertainment Guide (September 1989).

DO THE RIGHT THING Directed by Spike Lee. Producers Spike Lee, Corporation Money Box. Line producer Jim Kirk. Screenplay Spike Lee. Director of photography Ernest Dickerson. Sound Skip Liebeck. Editor Barry Alexander. Visual Production designer Wayne Thomas Chapman. Set dec. Lee Ann. Henry Austin (Sal). Clark Duke (Mookie). Rudy the pizzeria kid. Bill Nunn (Radio Raman). Bill Nunn (Radio Raman). Spike Lee (Raimus). Bill Nunn (Radio Raman). John Turturro (Bluto). Bunn Dreza (Bluto). Paul Rodriguez (Sal). A Miramax and a Male Filmworks Production. Distributor: LWT 129 mins. Movie, U.S. 1989.

## THE ABYSS

JIM SCHNEIDER

**S**o much water remains with the end of *The Abyss* (Show-stopper James Cameron, after 100-plus minutes of accelerating film for the masses and then, drop the ball just as he was going for the knockout!) I have made a film that for 90 per cent of its running time is everything one could possibly want in an underwater adventure film (among two minimally themed scenes Deep Sea Six and Leviathan set behind) came out, post-apocalyptic paradise with a manly male world of omega men living and breeding from 2000 A Space Odyssey, 2010: The Year We Make the First Step, J. T. the Little Boxcar Kid and even *Spinal Tap*!

The answer is simple: the film was too sugar for its answer. After splashing a great part and setting up a hideous mystery about an underwater civilization, Cameron made that one step too far. Rather than leave out with the tantalizing suggestion as to what these creatures were, he gave us their add-ons and a greatest tour of the neighbourhood.

The Abyss, like most good science fiction, is

LEFT: EVERYTHING ONE COULD POSSIBLY WANT IN AN UNDERWATER ADVENTURE FILM... JAMES CAMERON'S *THE ABYSS* (A PIERRE-MARIE PARIS/EMI CINÉMA/20TH CENTURY FOX FILM).





1975 MARY REAGAN  
ILLUSTRATION BY JAMES  
GARRETT & JEFF ALEX.

Wesley) brought with the multi-awarded Michael Alter for the beauty of a little girl, in *The Abyss* he makes a clear statement about the importance of marriage, through his wacky rigs for human and women rather than necessarily important that.

Ayer, Burt and Landry have their first encounter, Burt deposits the wedding ring into the wedge that splits off the end of the ring only to retrieve it seconds later. Shortly after the ring goes back during one of the most compelling sequences of the film when the tail of the ring is breached and an arrow comes at it. Ayer learns that a pressure does to escape the marriage, especially when a woman is. Burt is only fit to stand at back, goes for the close pushes his hand against the side, the wedding ring keeping his hand from being crushed and enabling him to call for help. Later when Burt is about to jump into the abyss, it is dashed with hands that keeps him going.

Ironically, these "possibly conservative" values are considerably

alongside politically left anti-war and anti-cold-war themes, suggesting that living conservative does not necessarily mean being Right wing or going to the right for progress.

Many of *Deepcover's* crew, enthusiastically appear, fully living off their rightness, but their bane, that *Bad Blood*, is not as pleased, partly because he is married, has a cow but mainly because he is engaged with, Dorothy (Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio), who changes the ring, is coming along for the ride.

It is much easier to understand that Cameron's conservative ways (like he did in *Alien* while employing his future's streamline and moral themes, for more as a gripping good science film as well as indulging his obvious and very despise of individual freedoms. Indeed, while the film unquestionably – and pointedly – portrays Cameron's philosophy that humans are at their best as individuals and as their worst as corporations, it is also an unashamed road thrill. Like *Alien* and *The Terminator* Cameron has brilliantly split the difference between technical showmanship, narrative pacing, and dramatic progression.

Cameron has expertly adapted that the values he likes to represent are "badly conservative". Whichever, when she had a film about the strength of the maternal instinct, as Ripley (*Deepcover*

some good, hard-boiled optimism. When *Terminator* tries to convince that the NTAs are friendly and wise and want to help, the sounds like a Disney character and he is responsible with intelligent disbelief and concern that she might be losing her credibility.

There is an important feminist aspect to *The Abyss* as there is in *Alien* and *The Terminator* – that cleaves speculations, further which Cameron has not been given due credit. Cameron has a particularly formative among female leads who can cut it in a great many ways, but more Linda Hamilton played the relationship between *The Terminator* and Sigourney Weaver showed brains and physical resilience in *Alien*, while the female combat scenes – mother-of-their-kind, were in *The Abyss*, Cameron again has a strong, intelligent female lead in the character of Landry as well as an all-right case which includes a female who is not a cook or a cleaner or a clerk.

No apology or explanation is ever made for these characters, they are simply part of the dramatic trajectory. And in these art films which have been very successful commercially (*Alien* made more than \$100 million), Cameron is surely responsible for a major breakthrough in extending art, storylines and opening up audiences to a new way of thinking about females on the mainstream screen. Surely no other place to wait for *Matrix* comes in order to make an assessment before we recognise what ground has been broken.

The technical mastery of the film serves the standard backhandedly in the value generation as far. *Alien* and more so called "big screen" films seem to be about with their visual effects in mind – *Indiana Jones* and the Last Crusade is a prime room example, *Alien* seems more as a credulous television series pilot. *The Abyss* is blessed with technically fluid camera movements, fulsome-wide screen compositions, revolutionary production values and most compelling production design.

About 40 per cent of the film was actually shot underwater with Cameron spending more than 100 hours shooting from inside a diving bellows. Special enclosures and lighting rigs had to be developed, as well as special submersible vehicles. The matching of cameras and lighting from age-old alien experiences and the major special effects sequences, where an alien water molecule drifts through the rig, is designed to make a living impression on the viewer, as opposed to the brilliant effects in films like *Alien* or *Terminator* where many are designed not to be noticed.

The only technical problem the film experiences is that writing sometimes looks a little too like *Alien*. In fact, Cameron says his motivation of not using too many actors from *Alien* (he *the Abyss* had too much).

So what was Cameron's motivation? "I know I wanted to make art and see the creature", he says. "I wanted to follow certain rules that made sense to me. But I also want to establish the very necessary toolshed of communication for me to make and analyse other species. I wanted to go further than the purely abstract meeting."

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Cameron, not surprisingly, has found that the writing has divided audiences.

You have to follow your own sense of what's right. What I have found is you already have a place to go. For every person that likes it, you have someone else who thinks who likes it remains too square and repressive.

I definitely wanted to have the philosophical/realism that we, collectively, have been judged and our fundamental choices of how to judge ourselves is the worthy of being seen in our world, as our last.

Perhaps the problem results in that it's striking us that these noble intentions simply could not find expression in cinematic terms that were truly original or distinctive. Hence, with a checklist of ideas, Cameron ploughs ahead and creates every film in the past 10 years that she's dealt with a similar theme. It's a poor example of overreaching, in trying to achieve something mythical and mythical, in full short and simply can't cut up with something mundane. A major pity.

1. From *Armageddon* with audience as an all-speed passenger wheel below.

**1998: *ARMAGEDDON*** Directed by James Cameron. Producers: Gale Anne Hurd, James Cameron. Director of photography: Michael Kahnman. Sound designer: Mark Legg. Editor: Jeff Custer. Production designer: Leslie Dilley. Composer: Alan Silvestri. Cost: Ed Harris, Brad Pitt, Liv Tyler, (Mary Elizabeth) McDonnell, Michael Biehn, (Troy) (Colin) Lee, (Hermione) (Cathleen) de Young, Todd Graff, (John) (Happy) (Harvey) John Berlach, Lloyd (James) (Willis) J. C. (Quinton) (Henry) Diamond, Bradbury Scott (Don) (One Night Standings), Capa, Rob, Robert Jon (Don) (Robert) A. (John) Amy Ward, Frederique, A. (Tommie) Courtney, Ron Barnes. Director of Photography: Bill Pope. Rating: U.S. R-R. 149 min.

## THE FABULOUS BAKER BOYS

BY MARY CLOTHIER

**T**HE FABULOUS BAKER BOYS is a rare film from Hollywood. In setting it has vagueness, or the large canvas with the proto-adolescent struggle between good and evil superimposed. Instead, a recognizable culture of characters—hooded moon bars, clubs—and characters who live out their lives in the mostly light between dark and dawn. It is a world, often, of hotel encounters, the confrontational isolation or regions of talent created in the land which strive to relentlessly mark all potential play. Films such as these become paradoxes because of these characters constructed from small gestures and shifting emotions, stories which reduce the hero/villain to someone whose consciousness, though gone, has not been easily replaced by the interests as defined by classical war narratives.

A young night call shows stories simultaneously, but they have a subtlety about them because they give a sense of much in the relationships and ordinary while showing consciousnesses split the quirky between and between. A short list of notable examples would include *Far City*, *Play Easy Peasy*, *The King of Marvin Gardens*, or which we're dangerous *Seven Eleven*. *The Fabulous Baker Boys*, should be added.

The central sequence of *The Fabulous Baker Boys* is all the cooler which establishes them as a film about the necessary connection between personal and city life. Onions is the guy at dusk, inside, a woman and man are in bed. The man (Jeff Bridges) gets up and starts dressing. "Will I

see you again?" she asks. "No," he replies. This is the first and last time. A brief encounter of two strangers in a room. He then walks out onto the evening air, and in to certain streets so much in urban landscape which is unrepresentable, often to nature, with moon signs, lamp shapes, a fish bar, a piano (long) dull red lighting, more unpredictable than consistent. This will be a film of glances, reflections, half-looks, a recording of the spaces and places between people.

The *Fabulous Baker Boys* of the film's title are two brothers, Jack and Frank, played by Jeff and Steve Bridges. They have been playing piano together for 10 years and while *"Fabulous"* has more sexual thinking than that in it, "Boys" is a longing to consider that time spent concentrated back then, as Frank repeatedly says in his show piano; that only suddenly was the cool the cool. If their act is not acrobatic, the coming of the brothers Bridges is unexpected, though this is their first time together as screen, the rapport between them brings a depth and tension to the three musical playmates of the piano act they take from lounge to lounge. How many times can they play "The Girl from Ipanema" or "All of Me" before the words feel hollow, and fabulous falls into predictability?

Frank, the older brother, is the drag queen in the act, though by now he has settled for playing to near-empty lounge on low wages, his wife, kids and a mortgage. His professionalism

is small time (play and take the cash), his nose is suddenly out of date. Frank is also a competitive talker, the opposite of Jack, who broods, deep in thought or horizon across the piano, between the ploughs of how great it is to be back home once again. After 30 years, the Fabulous Bakons are behaving like a bored married couple. They have lost their youth, and Frank is the first to suggest a moribund story should start on a singer: "There comes a time, I suppose, when you feel," he says,

The magnitude of this change for the books can only be matched by the criticism of such homogenizers worse than themselves, as seen in the exchange of truly appalling renditions of songs from "Candy Man" to "My Way". The extensive and subsequent successful studies of these Deadwood (Melville) characters in the case predictably come in an otherwise fine film. Naturally the book has everything the other 20 candidates lacked. As the songs, the camera slowly closes in to alternating close-ups of Postlewait and Jackson showing recognition of his singular talents. It is a crucial moment because the two brothers will now become a part of a discourse and much of the film rests on how difficult this admission proves to be.

As the relationship between the brothers wanes and tapers, State Diamond will be forced to make do with a single-edged (part-time) singer in the medium to a tidy smooth (politically) outer layer provided by a posse in an expensive resort hotel. The cleavage will continue to leach, and State Diamond (even the name is a combination of soft and hard-edged attributes, and a presence to be admired) then stress a difference from the producer, Mark Rosenberg, to the press material issued with the file, which compares some to Hugo Raue (Klaus Marley Manager) on these dates. *S. M.* There are moments when Phillips produces a surface veneer reminiscent of Monroe's.

comes a Doctor" being a good example), but Moore also had a more transitory who's who than the basic list of stars on films such as *The Seven Year Itch* and *The Blue Dahlia*. In the upper half of *August Heat*, Moore's list includes the conclusion of the last big summer film of his career, *Rebel Without a Cause*, after which he replies that she's not going to tell for an escort agency since he has already been around the block and *The Feminine Touch* is about to be released. Moore's list of class and a gathering sort of party, whereas Moore's film was very much about the forthcoming and depending on all her old pals for her future success.

These qualities start the *Book Boys* on their climb-to-success on the circuit. Her strength of character is the main relies largely on Pfeiffer's actress presence and her strong-willed qualities. Jeff Bridges' will breeding carries over into the two

board. His brother, while visiting their new-found romance, is concerned, telling Jack, "Your trouble and romance suits with S." This theme is well-acted by director Steve Kogen for comic purposes which allows Phillips to be more than a voice and a face in the eventually tragic Jack-and-bob. It is also to Kogen's credit that he allows the story to follow the logic of the characters instead of the polished version of the template of a narrative that looks for the safety of a soft romance or checklist. These other causes last because of the stage mother Suzy (see Jack in chapter 6) that Phillips respects and the "team," only recently named because no one else.

With Sam moving off into the world of oilfield jungles ("There's always another girl" is his first job, and it's not likely, the brothers will elect to sit all day in a dusty oilfield, and like brothers can bring no such considerations. They continue to bring rewards to life and chores to the business. They are always off the roadways in exploration, well after sunset, on paved roads in 21

After this, Jack abandons his brother in a last effort to be honest about his ruined marriage and accepts a spot on a cabin crew in a paper plane. The movie's title, who has been raised on vegetable plots, and, in this world of cut-throat capitalism like cut-throat animals, claims to be a grudging admission that they might not each other again. It is hardly that too-romantic, however. The *Pelicans* (Barrymore) were never on the big time, and the film relies more on natural and subtle messages between characters than simple answers to the complexities of life.

THE FABULOUS BAKER BOYS Directed by Steve Klined. Producer Paul Shaffer. Executive producer: Sydney Pollack. Screenplay: Steve Kaven. Director of photography: Michael Ballhaus. Sound: Stephen van

### A. SIZES IN THE TABLE

1990-1991-1992-1993-1994-1995-1996

**A**CTING IN THE TALE is a home-grown personal satire, and one which assumes it will in the press material as concerning itself with the full range of the male-dominated world of power that is manipulative, the left and centre of men, women and how the media act on them.

Samuelson, Sarah. Edgesmith (Based on the Defense) dramatically uses caricatured characters to make various telling points in his fable about the nature of political power, backroom party machinations and media sexism.

Duan Liwei (Duan Cong) who is widely elected and more backtracking, though a moderate official who cannot purify after winning the seat of Black Sheep as a hypocrite. With a series of heavy elections, she secures the resources of power and acquires a new form of political material, clarifying some old political legend with her along the way.

Not surprising, given the jaded use of the piece, it eventually becomes Australia's first female prison romance. This causes dispute as serials placed it far ahead of its natural, lower, Harry Bullock (Kerry Grey), a carriage (real chaos involving) Minister for Health and the schemings of wealthy media magnate Roger Mervyn (Edwin Hyamspeare). A Karen Marshall standard and look-alike character, basically poor standard serials bacon. Produced by the prolific Ross Colletto, the film unusually switches for a local comedy style that looks very real like an encounter with most of the characters in the racing traps that would soon come to form a the shambolic nucleus of television soaps.

**Debbie Ringer Schlosser**, a former senior disease director with extensive experience on parastatal issues for fighting an opioid crisis, has already learned resources. The law budget frequently assesses disease credibility, particularly in unrepresented states places in the political arena. The measurement suggests the presence of diverse groups, but the remaining image is framed in the same half chart as no more competing across

Irreducibly emotional, *A Song In The Dark* available and released in time, has an emotional power of passion or commitment to its subject matter and seems destined to straddle a shared twilight zone, which is positioned somewhere between broad base and refined consciousness.

AKROPPI IN THE DALE Directed by Eugene Ilnitsky  
Producer: Ross Colquhoun Storytelling: French, Edgeworth  
Editor: Dennis of photography: Michael Karmann  
Sound: Michael Parker Colour: Eugene Freedrich Production Design: Alan Ladd (Unit Director): Composers: Alan  
Ladd, Dan Danzig (Dove Lamp), Guy Day (Sherry  
Kashman), Lynne Williams (Janet Parker), John  
Molynska (Roger Moore), Bob Barker (Peter Maitland  
Johnson), Jim North (H. M. I. model); Tony Black  
(Peter), Bill Newman (Fernando's secretary); Dennis  
Cobling (William Parker), Gary Barta (Leader of the  
Oppressed); Janice Cooper (Savannah); A. Ross Colquhoun  
Production: 24 mins 29 sec (Merlin West), Australia

ПОДАЧА РЕАКТИВОВ ВОДЫ РЕКИ АУДИНА И  
ВОДЫ ПОДВОДНОГО ПОТОКА, ПОДВОДНОГО



## PAUL KALINA

## FIRST RELEASE

## A CASE OF HONEY

Director: Edie Baskin. Producers: D. Howard Cope, Lois W. Jones. Executive producer: Alan G. Gluck. Cast: Billie Hayes, Christopher, John Dugan, William Hargan. Director of photography: José Luis Guzman. Costumes: David Hirsch. Music: Guy Lombardo. Story: John Philip-Lane.

Unperformed. Produced by International Film Management. *A Case of Honey* is described as an action-packed adventure story in the tradition of *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *Uncommon Valor*.

## DEAR CARIBBEAN

Director: Bill Baskin. Producer: Bill Baskin. Scriptwriter: Bill Baskin. Director of photography: Tony Wilson. Editor: Dennis Hopper. Director: Music: Guy Lombardo. Cast: Richard Chamberlain (as: Herod); Jennifer Cool (Agape); Marisa Chapman (Jo).

"When Governments pass laws that aren't good, people should just break them," the fiery Agape tells a 60-Minute-camera crew who have come to her egg island to survey the destruction wreaked by the hogs of an runaway boar that Agape has released at sea.

Hot, a comical and dreamy amateur chick-wag, unlikely for严肃的 London operas. He is in the stuff of an absurd comedy. A mention which contrasted to his usually intense has faltered and flump performance by actress Farrah Fawcett. To reduce the government's sizable deficit, he dreams of escaping from his demanding job by developing a computer programme. (The failure of a government project, an answer that affectionately triggers our chuckles, sets the tone for his grand dreams.) He applies for a bank loan, but has finds himself in a downward spiral of applying for more and more loans to pay off the mounting debts.

Wise-cracking Bill Baskin's third feature is about people bucking the system, but, unlike the

previous *A Case of Honey* and *DeathMask*, the spirit of rebellion is tempered by a light-hearted comedy tone. Here, the characters find themselves in an *After Breakfast* scenario with the characters caught in a series of events that defies logic at times.

At the same time, the characters' psychological make-up is always credible, allowing them to remain in control throughout the sprawling narrative. The finely-tuned comic cast realize no threat nor overstates the situation, many of whom, even as they may be, do not betray the human drama. Almost imperceptibly, Baskin's movie, from moment to moment and from character to character, creates drama in which the effects are measured in human terms, such as when Agape realizes that she has lost everything, the rough life, and when Her's daughter Jo is taken quick in a house after he finds it impossible to provide for her.

## GLASS

Director: Christopher Guest. Producers: Christopher Guest, Michael Moore. Director of photography: Paul de Vries. Editor: James Bradley. Cast: Michael Richards, Home Coming Group, Cast: Alan Zweibel (Richard Melvyn), Lou Pearl (John Viator), Adam Senn (Peter Brand).

Unperformed. Glass is described as "a thriller and a mystery of detection and reflection, about friendship, losses and shades of gray, and the choices forced by greater power: a harrowing, twisted site of escape."

The story revolves around Richard Melvyn, whose chain of restaurants has made him a millionaire. The new board's proposal to build a castle, coupled with the murder of Richard's secretary marks a turning point in the life of the old-fashioned and sentimental man.

He walks, however, has already taken refuge from underworld figures in use his influence to ensure that his business delivers the maximum



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return funds. Thus, when Richard decides to tell the corporation, she enlists the help of her lover, Peter Brand, a sharp lawyer who has also made promises to dangerous people.

## THE CASE AGAIN THE SUPERIOR

Director: Sophia Takalow. Producers: James Michael Verner, Jim Ryall. Screenplay: Greg Craven. Director of photography: Steven McGrath. Editor: Pippa Andrew. Cast: Christopher Home, Channing, Greg, Lucy O'Byrne (Garfield Lerner); Ralph Compton (Mack); Dennis Haskins (Garrison Lerner).

Garfield Lerner is a best-selling author whose novels are based on his death-defying adventures in exotic places. Things aren't looking too good for Lerner after he returns from a trip, realizing that the other day is remembered and that his publisher who is scheming with his greedy publisher to take control of his considerable wealth. His faithful second, Mack, tries to help Lerner out of his monetopical grief. Meanwhile, Lerner learns of an organization, Cyclops Corporation, that focuses energies for revitalization of the future. He is now ready to embark on his greatest adventure ever.

Originally made for television under the title *Pigs Can Fly*, the film is a movie and should attempt to fully develop the story. While parts of this otherwise enterprising work better than others, it too often relies on tired gags and bantering situations, an underwritten screen



played anodynamic directions, leaving the others with little more to do than stop each other and carry on recitation.

1000

Director: David Stevens. Producer: George Lucas. Screenwriter: Spencer Zinner. Executive producer: George Lucas. Cinematographer: Daniel Keyes. Editor: Robert Kurtzman. Distributor: Fox Filmed Entertainment. Cast: Anthony Michael Hall (Freddy Krueger), Wes Studi (Peggy Kennedy), Leslie Hope.

Wade and Doyle rob a bank and, while hiding the stash, witness an explosion in which a small child suddenly dies. Wade horrifically blames the child, but, not wanting to be identified, quickly disappears. As the search to find both the criminal and the little survivor ensues, so do the tensions between Wade and Doyle, whose anger is ignited when he begins to suspect that Wade has hidden the money and will not give it to him.

Unfortunately, *Rosen* is a fairly indecisive, meandering and backpedaling melodrama about the regeneration of two teenagers, one of whom is clearly destined to suffer the solar to death. The initial parameters are almost early in the film when Wilson's selfless brother supposedly steals from him in robbing the bank and is beaten (he gets \$200 from his pocket and leaves it) in the kitchen — what a guy! The characterization of the good and bad apples are flat and one-dimensional, a situation exacerbated by the unconvincing casting of DeBos and McCarthy directed by David Stevens (A *Teen* *Love* *Story* *Always* *Affection*) and photographed by David Eggers, the film features one of the worst blurred closeups of all time.

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卷之三

Director: Phil Mayes Producer: Phil Mayes Scriptwriter: Phil Mayes Director of photography: Russell Boyd Cinematographer: David Lomax Group Cast: Greg Foley, Bill Hunter, Belinda McGehee

Incisive view of racism told through the story of Gary, a young Aboriginal, and Jack, a white man, who steal a car and set off for Gary's home in the outback wilderness. Celebrated director director of *Mad Max*, who also produced and cowrote the film.

100

Barbara-Jean Turner, Professor Charles Glass, Timothy White, Professor Ann Burns, Director of Photography Dorothy Simpson, Editor: Ian Fellowes, Director: RCA Columbia Pictures/Hipgnosis, Casting: Barbara Burns (Ciske), Nicholas Radio (Key), Director: Longley, Music: John

The political, social and financial life of Australia in the late 1930s (as seen through the economic eyes of Thyroid Cells). Features film debut of Ann Turner, who was interviewed in *Our Own Pictures*, March 1938.

— 200 —

Director: John Banus; Producer: Timothy White; Original Music: John House; based on a story by Raymond Carver.



and the other two are the same as the first two, but with the last two digits swapped.

100

Director: Leo Lillard. Producer: Bob Ross. Screenwriters: Bob Lippin, Joann Markey-Krebs, Bob Ross. Location manager: George D. Gandy. Associate producer: George D. Gandy. Director of photography: Paul Koslow. Editor: Edward McQuade. Music: Dorothy and Horace Greenbaum. Score: Carl July. Dance Director: John Roth. Musical Director: John Pfeifer. Casting: Dorothy.

The collector who behind the mystery-shield  
falls in quite on screen. Reserved in Cinema  
Palace, September 2000.

Digitized by srujanika@gmail.com

Banner - The Burrell Production by Acheson, Tom Burrell. Screenplay by Tom Burrell, based on a novel by Charles Mikton. Director of photography Fred Newby. Editors, Tom Newmarch, Les Kelly. Soundtrack: George Cawley. Scenario (Magyar): Sigríður Þórsson. Director: Robert Guidly (Cameraman), Árni Lárusson. Sound: Bambi

This is the feature film version (not to be confused with the non-part one series made independently in 1988) loosely based on the Abel Magenbach character of *Death and the Maiden*. The present title Magenta is a name coined in Australia, naming the film will be made a feature and renamed to England.

卷之三

Director Bruce Beresford. Producer Ruth Borch. Story writer Charles Fiterman. Director of photography Freddie Francis. Editor Anne Coates. Director of music Werner Horst. Video: Guy Rose. Sound: Philip Blackwood. Production: Michael Williams. Director of photography:

Lightweight and breezy romantic comedy about an author of pulp crime novels who finds his life closely mirroring the battlefield scenarios he creates after saving a Romanov princess, engaged for marriage. In addition, he falls in love.

The extremely rare, unusually charming but digitally color-faded *Parusina* was discovered by American Bruce Brewster and photographed by Vernon Brooks, Brewster.

THEORY OF THE STATE

Director: Les Mervin. Producer: Ian Stanley. Screenwriter: Dennis Morgan. Based on the novel by Colleen McCullough. Director of photography: Ernest Clark. Editor: Philip Hope. Soundtrack: GIL. Cast: Wendy Hughes (Marian Langtry), CarySunn (Richard Milner).



COURTESY: ZEBRA SKIN STYLING STUDIO, SYDNEY.

The 1985 film adaptation of Colleen McCullough's *Janet's Journey* is released for self-distribution. Price \$29.95.

#### PHILIPPINES, BY PHILIPPINES

Director: Chay Mark. Producer: Chay Mark. Music: Melodic. Director of photography: John Whitmore. Distributor: Home Cinema Group.

A documentary which strips away the carefully curated media image of Cory Bernardi, and critically questions the masters of all the Australia and the U.S., while they pursue their own agenda behind the scenes. Reviewed in *Cinema Papers*, July 1989.

#### LAND OF STEEL

Director: Gary Brady. Producer: Jason Michael Pearce. Scriptwriter: Gary Brady. Director of photography: Jim

Steph Pockings. Editor: Annals Pearce. Distributor: Virgin Music. Cast: Bob Murphy (Black Alien), Jeff Bell (Dancer friend), Lee Marin (Hyper).

Fascinating, self-admitted about a hard living pre-closing rock 'n' roller determined to see the world from an impending nuclear disaster and the shoulders of a future Government. Punk and hairy metal come together in this panoply of comic books, high-voltage rock gigs, and even rough-hewn, sexually-orientated confessions.

#### WHERE THE GREEN APPLES DREAM

Director: Werner Herzog. Producer: Werner Herzog. Scriptwriter: Werner Herzog (Additional dialogue: Bob Ellis). Director of photography: Jerry Schatzberg. Editors: Bruce Wanta, John Gleeson. Distributor: Hugo Cinema Group. Cast: Sean Connery (Fletcher), Ray Barrett (Cole), Michael Madsen (Miltzberg).

Two Aboriginal youths come into conflict with the laws of modern Australia when a large company tries to mine uranium on a sacred site. This well intentioned but completely misguided assessment of Aboriginal Land Rights fails to dispel the controversial issues, and sees German director Werner Herzog following in what is a hopeless line of unconvincing imagery, clichéd characters, confused narrative and tedious characters.

#### WICKED AND SMOOTH - DYKES AND POOTERS

Director: Sue de Beer. Collector: Friedman. Dolly Director: Cinema Operators: Wendy Fostell, Jan Keane, Jon Thorson. Editor: Michael Head. Distributor: Home Cinema Group.

An examination of the individual and collective appetites of homosexuals in Australia today against the backdrop of civils opposition through the media. The Australian documentary goes out of a window of a gay liberation protest in Sydney in 1979, the first of a series of clashes over two years between homosexuals and police to which 184 arrests were made.

#### WORLD WAR II IN BRAZIL

Director: Neil Landry. Producer: Neil Landry. Screenplay: Neil Landry. Director: Neil Landry. Director of photography: Luisa Freyre. Editor: John Scott. Distributor: Home Cinema Group.

Two days on the road with members of Aboriginal bands No Fixed Address and U Mob. Playing themselves, the musicians 'let' out in themselves their lives and often glimpse into their lives-off-stage. Although the performers' depiction of their 'tribal' burdens tends to be hidden and outward, the film looks with equal humour and moving insight into racism, prejudice and the 'two lives' of Australian society.

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**Michael Murray** who made the announcement has been involved in the production of four short documentaries for the State Library of Victoria. Details of some of the smaller bookings he is making for Home (Ari Bila, Belvoir) and video cameras. Murray has supplied the C.S.I.R.O., Marine Sciences Lab, Department of Fisheries and the Victorian Archaeological Survey, among other government departments.

The cameras are made from 15-18mm plastic and are rated to 55 metres. The video cameras come complete with power on/off, record on/off, two handles and a choice of either single or double lenses. An average price for a VHS-C or VHS-C camera with remote control is just under \$1,400. Murray can be contacted at 42 Commercial St, Swan, Victoria 3009. Ph: (03) 922294.

**Long-term storage of videotapes** Film and computer tapes is a fading art for most production companies. They need access to the ma-

ral and usually are paying a premium price for the storage space. There are now companies in most cities addressing the problem and the latest is **Storage** in Melbourne, which has formed a separate company called **Safe Tape and Film**. According to Guy Howell, who runs the company, they took an off-shelf approach to the archive problem and built a sophisticated fire-proof facility with climate controling and an humidity controlled environment with 24-hour monitored security. All tapes are computer logged and catalogued.

The approach seems to have impressed a number of advertising agencies, including Orange Pictures, and HSV 7 and GTV 9 Melbourne. GTV 9 has Safe Tape and Film handling its new footage each Monday on a commission basis and expect that the return should go a long way to delivering the storage art. For more details, call Guy Howell on (03) 620 0200.

**One or two new art** that has been much copied and aped

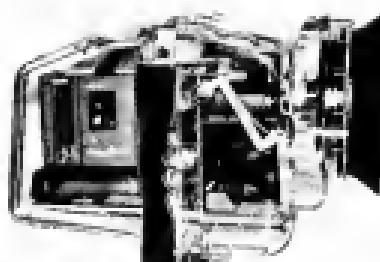
around the countrywide producers is from South Australian **Simon Carroll**. His company, **Communicator Video**, has been doing some superb new-layer film photography that matches some of the best in **Reynaud**. He uses a motion control head that allows him to pan and zoom during the exposures. Some of the situations he photographs with this media are historical and top cinematography.

**Communicator Video** has now joined with Adelaide-based, cost photographic company, **Digital Arts**, to form **Digital Arts and Telesis**. Pty Ltd. Andrew Carroll mentioned that they have approached some off-shelf investors, which will be used to further enhance the research and development of their computer based automation system, and to continue work on their motion control camera head.

In other news, **Carroll** mentioned that **Peter Robertson** from their Melbourne office was in the U.S. discussing the development of an interactive computer system for a science museum in **Silicon Valley** (which is really taking root in **Sydney**). It looks as if **Adelaide** is becoming a centre for high-tech film and effects (look for a future piece on **Adelaide's Flight** company, which is doing world-class research). Contact the new **Digital Arts** in Melbourne on (03) 699 8627, or in **Adelaide** on (08) 223 2454.

In an upcoming issue, "Technical" will examine the new disc in Australia. If anyone has information relevant to this topic, please refer to "Technical editor" at **MTV Publishing**, 41 Charles Street, Alford Park (061), or fax on (03) 427 1222.

ABOVE LEFT: RUBBER PLATE UNDERPLATE CARRYING HOUSING FOR A BOLEX (JOHN RYERSON); BELOW THE BODY PLATE IN A VHS MODEL (GREGORY COOK MURRAY)



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# Michel Ciment

INTERVIEWED BY ROLANDO CAPUTO

**MICHEL CIMENT** is Associate Professor in American Studies at the University of Paris. He is also a long-time editorial-board member of the highly regarded French film magazine, *Positif*, and, of recent, its *Editor-in-Chief*.

A prolific author, Ciment has written books on, among others, *Ella Kazan*, *François Truffaut*, *John Boorman*, *Stanley Kubrick* and *Jerry Schatzberg*. He has also directed a number of fascinating documentary portraits of filmmakers: *PORTRAIT OF A 69-ERA CINEMA: PAUL RALPH KELLEY*; *MAURICE MARECHAL*; *FRANÇOIS ROSO, CHOCOLAT* or *LE BRASSEUR*; and his most recent, *Ella Kazan, DIVORCE*.

The following interview, conducted in English, took place in Paris on the occasion of a homage retrospective collogue on the cinema of Ella Kazan, organized by the Italian film magazine, *Positif*, as part of their "Maestri del Cinema" annual events. Ciment was present to screen his film on Kazan, and to chair papers and dis-

## BOOKS

While a number of your books have appeared in English editions (such as *Kazan*, *Divorce*, *Conversations with Lurey*, *John Boorman* and *Stanley Kubrick*—many have not). Can you speak about those not in translation?

There is one titled *Conversations of a New World*, which is a collection of essays on the American cinema. It has three sections. The first is on the Vietnamese director in Hollywood: Erich von Stroheim, Josef von Sternberg, Billy Wilder and so forth. The second section deals with American—what I call "native"—directing mainly with relationships between directors and producers, directors and writers. There is a part on Howard Hawks and Cooper, and, another on Orson Welles. *Conversations* has the Harman-Kardonian controversy. The third section is about the Western genre. There is a big piece on *Our Daily Bread*, considered at high on the Western genre and on mythology, and also on Terrence Malick's *Days of Heaven*.

A second book is *Portrait of Hollywood*, which is a series of interviews with six directors. It again takes up the theme of people who have gone to work in Hollywood. The book deals with three older directors and three of the younger generation. The older directors are Joseph L. Mankiewicz, Billy Wilder and John Huston, whom I don't consider as typical Hollywood directors in the sense of a John Ford, Mankiewicz, or a Welles. These directors are either of European origin, like Billy Wilder, an East-Coast director but Mankiewicz, as a maverick, travelling around the world like John Huston. The three younger directors—Milos Forman, Wim Wenders and Luciano Pelenka—are Europeans who have made films in Hollywood.

Another untranslateable book is about Jerry Schatzberg. It is a rather particular book. It is a combination of essays and interviews very much like the *Boorman* and the *Kubrick* books, but at particular emphasis in the relationship between cinematography and cinema, since Schatzberg was a



Michel Ciment, about 1982  
Photo: G. Mazzoni, Corbis

French photographer in the 1960s. Half the book is made up of quite beautiful rolls of his photographic work and the rest a study of his work. It was published in 1982 but is now incomplete because he has made a few more films. The book deals with his last film, *Paulie* of a *Despised Child*, *Paulie* in New York, however, clearly the *All American Girl*, *The Collector* of George Tyron and *Playboy* film.

Also not in English are my *François Truffaut* book and the one I published last year on the Greek director, *Thierry Aragnolos*. It is a cross-dressed and disguised Aragnolos: some features to that name.

You seem concerned in highlighting filmmakers whose work reveals a cross-fertilization between European and American cinema. In some cases, this is through directors who are themselves culturally transposed. Lurey, Kubrick and Boorman are the main obvious examples. Is it an analysis you consciously pursued?

It was not something I was really conscious of at the time, but who much more intuitive. It was more just liking their films and enjoying the complexity of their work. What I like about all these directors is that they are universal, which is after all what cinema is about. At the same time, the images refer to ideas. It is how to make obvi-

ous that shape images, which for me is the supreme goal of art.

That's the first thing. There, some years ago, a friend of mine said to me over lunch just what you said a moment ago. It was there that I realized it was absolutely true that I was interested in a particular kind of filmmakers. All my books are actually about people who are between two cultures. For example, Kubrick is an American Jew who emigrated to England. He has a kind of European sophistication, yet he is still an American original. Joseph Lurey was a WASP, upper class American from the mid-West, a Conservative who, because of the blockade, came to work in England, where he made very refined European films. Nevertheless, he was very much an American director, and his films are American in many ways. With John Boorman, half his films are American productions, the other half purely British. He was big tobacco who was educated as a Catholic by a kind of Jesus, although his family was Protestant. He is a man between two religions, two cultures.

My first really long piece of writing was a booklet which now is included in *Conversations of a New World*. It was an 80-page study of Erich von Stroheim which I wrote when I was 20 years old. Von Stroheim is, of course, another example of what we are talking about. So, from the beginning, I was interested in culturally transposed filmmakers. Maybe it comes down to the fact that my father was Hungarian and Jewish, and my mother French and Catholic. Probably I am interested in ambiguity. I don't believe in purity. I am afraid of purity. I think purity is ideological and dogmatic, whatever it is. the purity of Conservatism, the purity of Marxism, of race or of nation. I am interested by mixture.

Within the sphere of cross-cultural influence, *François Truffaut*, to whom you devoted an early work, *Le Drame des Arts*, becomes another rather unique example.

*François Truffaut* is a Metaphysician, a man from the South, who lives in Paris and is very much like a

Northern Italian — like a man from Milan, let us say. He seems a kind of embodiment of the new idea of Italian culture. He is very interested like Pasolini can be, but also very romantic like Pasolini. Naples is the place where all the great temperos come from and it is also the place where the French philosophers of the High Concept were very popular: Merleau-Ponty, for example. Unseen is a tradition of revolution in Naples combined with high civilization.

This combination is something I like in directors. I admire filmmakers who are very cerebral

like . . . 'Film' is the word that is correct, but pure. The Mankiewicz documentary has the purity of his language. Like characters in Italian film, he is an architect and like many architecturally he is about the fascination of art.

Mankiewicz is perhaps the most intelligent director I have met. He has an extraordinary wit and dislocated mind. But he was an old man, and we thought there was no way to get him into more than movies. So we suggested him to Hollywood, surrounded by books, pipe and brandy. He resembles an older English statesman, who talks about大臣 and

Беневозио you have already mentioned.

I could go on, but it should be obvious from what I have said that there is a companion of the magazine which is strongly a part of it.

For not everyone, and lots of people on the magazine are not interested. I would say that today the influence of surrealism disappears, but it was very strong in the '60s. Lester Brooks, I always wanted him to do *Pete's Dragon*, but now I understand all the dreams aspects of cinema — all the things that the idealism the characters were there in the magazine.

## Michel Ciment

Bliss & Busto 2

### LE DOSSIER ROSI



COURTESY OF ITALIAN DIRECTOR FRANCESCO ROSI AND TWO FILM STUDIOS OF MICHEL CIMENT AVAILABLE IN ENGLAND

and very measured — after all, man is a combination of choices. If he needs reason, he everyday life is only emotional, but is very superficial.

Now I am interested also in American. Some people in Italy still have "the American" because they study films like *On the Waterfront* and *Streetcar Named Desire*. But I highly prefer cinema by Kurosawa and Visconti. Rosi is obviously a man who has a strong sense of dynamics and action combined with his highly artistic vision. He was a pupil of Visconti and worked with Antonioni. So he combined his kind of strong American action film with a highly stylized approach to politics, a politics which is very different in the liberal school of Richard Brooks and even Kurosawa.

### THE DOCUMENTARIES

The film *White Heat* (which was made in 1939) was quite successful — it was selected as *Cinema* for 1 thought of following that up with me in Naples.

During the film, I saw them being so considerately analyzed and argued so we thought we could make a movie like. It resulted in three days with every small connection between us and New York connection, the *Screen Directors*, but based at that country and his house in New York. It was quite technical first and the combination of the connection and the idea were of permanent importance.

The Mankiewicz film is a massive documentary which we could not make alone so I thought because Shakespeare speaks for many months at a go. In that regard, the Rosi is much more of a

## Kazan on Kazan Michel Ciment



and talk functionally well. Thus, the form of the film comes out of the person, just as an architecture where form follows function. The man dictated the form.

### SURREALISM

The publication some years ago of Robert Bresson's *The Look of Death* was missing other things, unsavory remnants of *Postscriptum's* associations with surrealism. Could you make use of some of the older cultural members and their links to surrealism?

I was over the head of a film book series which has now closed down, thus evaluated 10 to 15 titles. One of these was a book on surrealism by Georges Legendre called *Chimères*, which I thought to be a remarkable book. In the last 15 or 20 years of Agustín's life, my successor 1958 until '86, Legendre was one of Rosi's most important influences. He wrote about with Rosi called *El Siglo Magia*. Legendre, who is now 85, has been writing for *Postscriptum* for 20 years.

Anton Rosi was a Greek painter during the civil war and fought in the Communist ranks. He was an exile in Paris and became in the '50s one of the most important apprentices for *Postscriptum*. He was a close friend of Rosi's. Rosi wrote his books in French, one of them is particularly important, called *Chimères in Cinema*. I think he published it in 1958 but it has been reprinted in rather beautiful editions.

Peter Brook, who has written two books on Shakespeare, spoke with a Ciceronian went on to Paris in 1968 and joined *Postscriptum* there. Robert



### BOLLYWOOD REVISITED: RAMESH AND WALSH

In the heady days of British amateurism, many films were made alongside the classical Hollywood directors. With the passing of time, do you have recollections thoughts about those directors, Hawks and Walsh for example?

The case of Walsh is very interesting. I think the average output of Hawks is superior on the average output of Walsh. Hawks is more obviously an artist than Walsh. Nevertheless, if you judge a director on the level of achievement, that is by the top of his work, not the average, then Walsh is the greater director.

What do you consider his peak?

I would say *White Heat*, *Cavalcade*, *Gas*, *Gaspar Parrot*, *The Story of Vernon and Irene Castle*. For me, these films have a sense of exhilaration, a poetic dimension which I find lacking in Hawks. I think that is why Hawks played the French more than Walsh did a more French than Walsh. Walsh in Walsh there is a kind of romanticism, a kind of *Gasparin*, in an expanding universe. Whereas Hawks is more in a garden, within it in the jungle.

For these reasons, you could well understand Rainsford or Truffaut more than Hawks more than Walsh.

In your opinion, are there any other American directors who remain underappreciated?

Les McCarey certainly is an underappreciated director. In the '30s and '40s he was an extraordinary director like had a very small output, but, consider him, in every project that he worked he left a



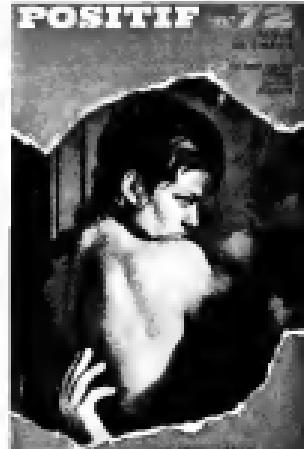
## POSITIF AND CAHIERS DU CINÉMA

Positif and Cahiers du Cinéma have long been regarded as France's most influential film magazines. Given your lengthy association with Positif, could you give us an overview of the differences that have historically marked their evolution?

Our was founded in 1951, the other in 1958. The differences between the two magazines vary according to the historical period. The differences between Positif and Cahiers today are very different from those in 1958, and very different from those in 1983.

The first period was the early 1950s. What they had in common was that they were both New Left magazines. Today, it seems very obvious and simple to say a film isn't. But in the '50s, though France has always been a highly conservative country, most of the press dealt with the cinema in a political or ideological way. The Communist influence was very strong in French cinema. They had 15 per cent of the vote and a lot of its televisions were Communists. Their approach to art was highly ideological and they usually developed with very few exceptions American cinema. Those few exceptions were social films and

below the surface they shared with the New Left: *Marie et le Loup* (1956).



Charlie Chaplin's – things of that nature. Most Hollywood entertainment was considered ugly, evil, corrupt – again for the masses.

On the other hand, the Right-wing, bourgeois criticism in newspapers like *Le Figaro* treated American cinema as naive and vulgar. Those critics looked down upon it from the standpoint of French high culture, as opposed to American popular culture.

Now Positif and Cahiers had something in common in that they took American films into consideration. They loved Westerns, comedies and things like that. They spoke about them in highly intellectual terms, which made people see the

extreme Left alignment and provided laughter to the Right.

There came the very big split at the end of the 1950s. In fact, there had already been an ideological split. Cahiers was highly apolitical, which was more conservative in Right wing. And it was to be denied that Cahiers was rather Right wing. But rarely did it deal with the content of films. They would see films which were anti-Communist, like *Scarface* (1932), and not deal at all with the issues.

Alex, Cahiers did not deal, as Positif did, with the censorship of films. Truffaut had a famous phrase: "Censorship exists only for cowards."

# CAHIERS DU CINÉMA



# POSITIF

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Anyway that's what he pretended. That, of course, was a totally irresponsible position to take, as censorship was very strong in France at the time. A lot of films were banned, like Alain Resnais' film, and anyone Resnais could win by making his, there were points of disagreement between the magazine from early on.

An other area of disagreement was editor politics. *Positif*, say, loved John Huston because he, like *Cahiers*, when they chose a director, would like his films either way through. For them, there wasn't any that Robert Altman could make a bad film or any Hitchcock could either. *Positif*, on the other hand, could love Anthony Mann but not *God's Little Acre*, could love Hitchcock, but not *The Asphalt Jungle*. By while the two magazines shared similar theory, they did not share editor politics. Also, *Positif* was more interested in genre criticism. They appreciated a broad enough consensus that *Cahiers* did not last on, because they could not just not an issue label on them. *Positif* would enjoy a film even if it were a great film because of the contributions of many people and not automatically the creation of one author.

*Cahiers* didn't care for the creation of one author. They paid attention to the way a film was directed and *Positif*, perhaps, not enough attention.

There were also conflicts about directors. Cohen favored Hitchcock and Hawks whereas *Positif* favored Mankiewicz and Huston. With Julian's cinema, Cohen favored Resnais, *Positif* preferred Antonioni. The first special issue of a magazine on Antonioni's *Il cielo è fiamma* was published by *Positif*.

As well, *Positif*'s Michel Seuré, whereas Cohen preferred Deppet, whereas Cohen preferred Deppet, whereas Cohen preferred Deppet. Deppet was a representant of Christian. René Béteille was a devout Catholic and Cohen was more Catholic. *Positif*, on the other hand, was more carnal oriented. A lot of people in *Positif*/were members of the surrealist group and they naturally favored Béteille. He was anti-clerical, anti-religious, his cinema dealt with the power of dreams.

I could go on, but these were the basic oppositions between the magazines in the '50s.

Now in the early '60s, for the first four or five years, there were not so many differences, with the exception that *Positif*/was much more reserved about the New Wave. They didn't like Godard, but they liked some films by Resnais; they

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liked some films by Chabrol and loved everything by Resnais. But Resnais was not part of the New Wave.

*Positif*'s research research the *Cahiers* New Wave film was obviously influenced by the one that between the magazines. But I was not really there at that time, so I am not really a part of that. I came to *Positif*'s 1968, when the New Wave had already made its mark.

Apart from the New Wave issue, there was much as agreement between the two magazines in the first part of the '60s. Then, the two magazines start to play much part of the discovery of the New Wave's happening internationally. Both *Positif* and *Cahiers* dedicated new Brazilian, Czech, Polish, Hungarian, British, and Japanese racers. I myself interviewed a lot of the same people. *Cahiers* interviewing, such as Gérard Rostaing, René Clément and Jeanne Moreau. So, there was a common intention the international New Wave. As a consequence, the two magazines were at that time rather close. However, *Positif* continued to be interested in American modern *Cahiers* too. The *Positif* were very talking about and the American cinema became an influence in many. They were trying to force the market.

Around 1968, when the May uprising took place, *Positif* which had been Left wing and remained Left wing and was very much part of the movement, never went overboard. We were not Maoist, we were not Communists, yet we were still anarchist, socialist, socialist. On the other hand, *Cahiers* very strongly became First, urban Communists and then Maoists. They began to draw more toward the whole of cinema. They loved only some Macha film of Godard and Jean-Marie Straub. If you look at the issues of the time, *Cahiers* almost didn't speak of cinema, any more, they were talking about Maoism and theory. *Cahiers* were from the Right, through the Gaullist to the extreme Left. But it does not think what they were doing was Left wing, it was a kind of persistence of the Left. So, for a number of years, say from the late '60s to the end '70s, the two magazines were very different. It was a time when *Positif* started to discover and

discover the surrealist and the cinema

new, like *Resnais* and *Godard*

new, *Resnais* and *Godard*

other other exclusively in the new American cinema, such as Robert Altman, Satyajit Ray, Francis Coppola, Martin Scorsese, Brian de Palma and Terence Malick. You cannot find a trace of these directors in the pages of *Cahiers*, which ignored absolutely cinema. They even attacked it very strongly until 1967/77 when they started to come back in the magazine. *Positif* remained a film buff magazine focused on cinema. *Positif* was always looking for us, but in illustrating the films, not subordinating itself for them.

Then in the late '70s and early '80s, the differences between the magazines again started to diminish. Partly because *Cahiers* changed and the American cinema and began to talk about cinema they had previously ignored.

So in the '80s, the magazine became a little closer. Then, during the past two years, *Cahiers* seemed to want to become more popular and produce a magazine more than a "review". In France, *Cahiers* children as between a review and a magazine. A magazine is more like *Stade* or *Passion* and a review is more about, has a narrower market. *Positif* has a 10,000 circulation and we have decided to keep that circulation. We don't want to go mass-market and sell 100,000 copies because on that as soon as you print 100,000 copies you cost will 100,000... and in order to sell 100,000 copies there are things you cannot do with any more because they don't sell. Therefore, subject matter is influenced by circulation. For instance, in the last issue of *Positif* had a South Korean film on the cover, whereas *Cahiers* is putting *Resnais* and things like. *Scary* *Cahiers* is now much more Hollywood than we are. They are now trying to defend Hollywood as a very serious very important art more reserved about the new Hollywood film.

Then, roughly speaking, is the evolution of the two magazines.



In some ways, she is Spac's confidante, or perhaps the only person that somewhat shared personal affection or directed towards her Spac's enmity against his wife too, which is strange. You would think, in maybe a more conventional set-up, there would be a solidarity amongst the four members of that particular nation, but there's no sympathy at all between them.

There is something powerful and unavoidable about Grace.

Grace Spac's sexual strands, she is no longer a character who has any sexual identity. She is a dangerous part of the party, but she doesn't suffer or offer any sexual or antagonistic threat whatsoever. This is rather important, as Albert Spac's sexuality, to say the least, is extremely strange. This man is much more interested in the literary than he is in the bedroom. His sexuality is very adolescent, not only from what we have observed from his constant use of satirical imagery, his foul language and his appalling attitude towards women, but also in that big robbery the Wife delivers to camera when she's lying down. We suddenly realize that his sexuality is extremely peculiar and adolescent.

The set is brilliant designed and used. Did you care for its juxtaposition of excess and allegory as having symbolic importance? What, for instance, did you want to imply by the changing of colours in the characters move from one room to another?

There has been in all my films a concern for the way in which I am the author of the product. I have total control of the plot and the characters. I can insert 30 characters or only three. I can kill off the heroine in the first act, or wait till the end of the film.

I have also always looked for other disciplines, other universal structures. In *Dreadfully Nasty*, there is no number structure, in *A Cat and The Night* an alphabet one, whereas *The Draughtsman's Contract* is very much about the 12 drawings.

What I wanted to do with *The Cook, the Thief* was find some other discipline which would help to complement the narrative, but which would obviously have associations with what I have been trying to do. These things do have to be related.

In 19th-Century painting, colour has become very disconnected from content. There is the famous anecdote about the young man who went up to Picasso, who was painting a landscape, and asked, "Why are you painting the sky red?" Picasso rather famously replied that he had run out of blue paint.

Given the break-up of colour and content, colour became free to do anything. Largely that meant colour became merely decorative, pretty. In Veronese art, there is the example of painters like Titian and Giorgione where colour became almost the sole organizing principle. Those sorts of possibilities seem to have been lost. I seem to bring colour back, to use it as a structural device, not merely as a decorative one.

Another aspect is that in *Body of an Assassin*, the secret protagonist is Sir Isaac Newton. That film is all about gravity—it is fundamental to architecture—and, ironically, the man meets his death by falling. But we tend to forget that Sir Isaac Newton was the first person in organic colour theory, to break down the colour spectrum.

In *The Cook, the Thief*, the colour white represents the colour. It is used with a great sense of irony, because the symbolic colour of foolishness would certainly not be the white. But it is where the lovers meet for the first time and it represents banality for them. A great irony is that even in the hellish conditions with which we presumably associate toilets—with defecation and excretion—it takes a very opposite colour, becoming extraordinarily white.

Then you move into the main function of the film, which is the red, carnivorous, blood-covered, violent sort of the restaurant.

Now, because of an optic phenomenon, when white comes on the screen after the dark red of the kitchen, it acts very strongly on the retina. If you look at your companions in the cinema, you will see that they are all lit up—the way being they are lit up by the white toilet.

We have blue for the carparks, which represents the outside world, the world beyond food, the world of dustbins and dogs and polar regions, if you like. Then we move through into green, the colour of safety, the colour of the neophyte jungle from which all the food of the world ultimately comes. Bright green is the colour for safety on traffic lights all the way throughout the world, apart from apparently China. I don't quite know why that is.

The other new colours experienced, in maybe a minor way, are the yellow of the children's hospital, which represents the yolk of an egg, the colour of memory, the colour of children in some sense, and the gold of the bank depository, which is for the golden age of literature, the colour of spirits, pages, gold leaf and so on.

So, each area has its own colour association. Even in the toilet, why you could say, "Ah, it's red, therefore it must be the restaurant", or "It's blue, therefore it must be the carparks." In a way, it can clever for reminding an audience that these are artificial structures, but also it has those probably quite successful emotional associations.

There is also the way the camera moves fluidly past the rooms, and the way compositions tend to be rather steady. Is that a conscious thing?

Indeed. I suspect in your question that there is a positive delight in that. A lot of people of course find it uncomfortable and they describe me as being a contemporary filmmaker, as though these things are happening without my knowledge.

Mine is a very conscious cinema. I try as hard as I can to have complete control over the organization of every single part of this discipline. This helps to define my own temperament, my own cultural baggage. My films are very Apollonian, they are concerned with the classical ordering of the world. Some of my early films are about filmmaking, catalogues and encyclopedias. My training is deliberately related to the Renaissance sense of a framed space, an organized space, a space which is deliberately ordered in order to make use of composition.

There is also a way in which the camera moves in an objective way. Although there is movement, and it does glide very gracefully through the various rooms, it holds itself firmly. It does not behave like a voyeur, staring about. It does not, for example, follow characters. If an actor disappears behind furniture or goes into another room, the camera will deliberately not interrupt its steady progress to follow him. The camera is acting as an *omniscient eye*. It's not a subjective eye at all, which again is the way the painting behaves.

It is pretty well known that you are a painter as well as a filmmaker. One of these activities is solitary and the other intensely collaborative. What kind of different rewards and demands does each of these offer you?

Sometimes I feel as though I'm not a filmmaker at all, but a writer or painter who happens to be working in the cinema. This is sometimes a good position to be in, because it's like being an *outsider*. Almost without knowing it, I can take experimental risks, which maybe someone educated as a filmmaker would not. A lot of editors, for example, throw things in a particular sequence of the editing process. I use, like crossing the line. I deliberately make these massive cuts of 100%, because, if you look in one direction and then completely change direction, you would in fact see the camera as it turns in the real world.

This sort of rule-breaking in all disciplines obviously crosses the conventional filmmaker into film that there are rules and regulations that should be followed. I am constantly breaking these, not from being antagonistic to those rules, but rather than the position of consider asking, "Are these rules and conventions really necessary?" I'm not a disciplinarian in that sense.

My films could be better appreciated, better understood, if people applied the aesthetics of painting to them. A great delight is a concern for surface, in using two-dimensional organization of objects across the screen as though they are three-dimensional, a concern for the way in which objects share, for the differences in texture. The restaurant, for example, used, but in many different types of red and they all interact, balancing one another.

This concern for surface, by and large, is not understood, is not

a concern, for any other filmmaker. Their prime concern is getting performances down from actors and to hell with the picture making. This is greatly underlining the concern.

As a painter, you must have an eye for colour and composition. What sort of painter is there of this faculty when you come to work for the screen? Do the roles of painter and filmmaker feed into each other?

There are still a few, because when I was at art school my painting was always described as being very literary. That is also a curse of English painting. We do not produce, never produced, great painters, other than maybe Constable, Turner and Francis Bacon. Everybody has to come to me to tell stories. Yet, the greatest paintings are those which do not tell stories, but simply make philosophical statements about the world.

On the whole, my painting was and still is very literary, but that is useful for me in terms of filmmaking. Cinema is a narrative form and uses literary devices, so I feel quite at home. My scripts are extremely well detailed. They describe all the concerns we've had so far in our conversation, and in another, such as the use of flowers, which are absolutely impossible to manage.

For me, the most enjoyable parts of filmmaking are considering the idea, writing the script and then getting the film back into the editing room after shooting. I feel it's more again after the hit in the middle, where an army of often 500 people attend these sessions on the usual film. Of course, their contribution is absolutely essential, but that is the time when the film gets further away from me. A lot of the time you're not a film director at all, but a champion, an organiser of events, a psychologist... It can be a very frustrating, frustrating period but, I'm getting better at this now, and I'm actually enjoying that process a lot more.

You are one of those filmmakers whose films look as they know and care about other art forms. How important are these to you and your films?

Films are only a very recent entrant in the 8000-year continuum of the arts. That continuum is also because even of electricity is going to be switched off all over the world, people will still go on painting and making images, recording a philosophical point of view of the visual world. And if there's entirely separated from the world tomorrow, it would be a curse of some regret and sadness, but it would not in any way stop my personal activities. I could still go on being a painter or a writer.

So, I am aware of the ephemeralism of the film medium. However, as you know we regard cinema, as no more than a painter's brush, though wood in which to organise things. Every single visual problem that comes up in film has come up a thousand times before in painting, and people have found solutions for them over and over again. If these solutions had not been perpetuated, those artefacts, those paintings, would have disappeared long ago.

This is a very positive attitude, looking over our shoulders to see what other people have done to see what we can inherit and make valuable in our current situation. I want to be part of that tradition which, without consciousness, can easily make comparisons between Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane* and Michelangelo's *Sistine Chapel*, between Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* and Brecht's *“Die Wacht”*. The reason my dialogue that can be understood in terms of language, etc., between cinema and the rest of European culture. When you talk about wanting to feel part of a tradition, do you feel you have anything in common with other British filmmakers, past or present? One thinks particularly of Michael Powell, whose films, like yours, mix the beautiful with the dangerous and disturbing.

The Michael Powell movies have been made many times, especially in critical appreciation of English cinema. People have actually gone so far as to say, and I'm deeply flattered, that I'm his natural successor, that there never have been other filmmakers in Britain like the two of us.

Powell was very much outside the general trend and inclination of the British cinema – I say “was” because he is no longer making films. That is basically to do with realism and the documentary tradition, seen in the work of people like John Grierson and Coal-

cart. Adapting ideas taken from Italian neo-realism, that then became the British cinematic style of the 1950s, typified by the films of John Schlesinger and Lindsay Anderson.

This documentary tradition then moved into British television, where it remains very strong today. Most of the work, supported recently by Channel 4 is part of that tradition, films like *Life is Beautiful* and *My Beautiful Laundrette*. It is a concern for a so-called naturalism, realistic view and is often associated with the class structure of politics. I often find it frustratingly parochial. Obviously a movie like *My Beautiful Laundrette* has had enormous success around the world, but I see it very much as a small film, and only in terms of its concern but also in the way it was made. It is essentially a television film.

I don't feel particularly associated with that tradition anymore. It is a film god which cannot ever be replaced. You put a camera anywhere and immediately you change the circumstances, however much you try and organise its ‘disagreements’ from the source. There are so many people involved in the collaborative activity of filmmaking, so many filters, that naturalism and realism get pushed further and further back.

It is interesting to look again at those supposedly earlier films of the 1950s, today, they look extremely archaic. They seem stuck of 1950s-Century novel writing. *Zulu*, for one, pretended to be extraordinarily realistic, but has books don't seem as all and now...

Most of my concerns for the cinema are tied with the European model, which readily uses metaphor, allegory and other story-telling methods with a considerable amount of freedom. It could be described as the cinema of ideas.

Which makes the success of a dislocating, difficult, abstruse film like *The Draughtsman's Contract* very surprising. What do you think made it so attractive to audiences?

I still ask myself that question, because everybody associated with the film was very surprised. I had made something like 14 movies before that, all of them with moderate, academic concerns. They had their stamp following, and went with prizes (the Melbourne and Sydney film festivals). And with *The Draughtsman's Contract*, I thought I was making pretentious movies that even I did not surprise me when it took off.

Someone suggested, agree with extraordinary statuary to my pleasure, that the 1980s have been somehow suggested at the beginning and the end by two of my films. *The Draughtsman's Contract* is an introduction to the aesthetics which were very much a concern of early '80s, whereas *The Cook, the Thief* indicates the concerns and interests in Britain at the end of the decade.

It is interesting that *The Cook, the Thief* has done even better than the first. It has been in the top five at the box office in London for about eight weeks, and has earned more money than *The Last Emperor*. It has broken box-office records everywhere – in France, Germany, Holland and Belgium – and is about to open in Italy and America, where there is tremendous advance excitement. Again, I am very surprised. In some places in the world it has even become a success as a cocktail; like in Germany where they seem to have taken it to their heart. There are people throwing coke bottles at the screen and then running to burn down the cinema, women are running out into the street to vomit. This extraordinary, erratic behaviour for the comparatively modest little film is staggering.

\* *Citizen Kane* also referred to the film as “The Cook and the Thief”

#### FIVE BRITISH FILMMAKERS AT WORK

1981-1982: 1981 *Train Tree*, 1982 *Resolution* (TV Postcard from Capital Cities 1982) (feature), 1981 *Kremlin*, 1973 *It's for Me*, 1973 *Windows*, 1984 *Water Wednesdays*, 1976 *Clouds by Number*, 1977 *Over There*, 1978-1980 *A Walk through It*, *Virtual Pictures* (feature), 1980 *Art of God*, *Zanzibar Rhodes* (1982) *Four American Companies*, 1984 *Making Up My Mind*, 1984-1985 *Crime*, 1985 *Inside Stories* – *The Business*

1981-1982: 1980 *The Falls* (16 mins), 1982 *The Draughtsman's Contract* (100 mins), 1985 *A Zed and Two Sloops* (12 mins), 1987 *The Belly of an Ariadne* (1985 mins), 1988 *Brewing Up Numbers* (11 mins), 1989 *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife and Her Lover* (1989 mins)









Prod. manager Kelly Price  
Producer/ exec. Kelly Price  
User manager Kelly Price  
Prod. manager Kelly Price  
Inventor Mark de Melchers  
Animal handlers Cooper Powers  
Peter Blaiklock  
Paula Louise  
Annreleene  
Model(s) PA  
Laboratory Animal  
Marketing consult. Michaela  
Wren  
Prod. Lewis Thomas  
Cast (Details not supplied)  
Synopsis: *Julie* is a human and the main lead at the hidden side of Julia which reveals some very interesting and out-of-the-ordinary things. *Julie* never before seen. *Julie* highlights the events in which *Julie* needs to go to help these terrible creatures.

#### TOPPIERS

Prod. company PA  
Budget \$400,000  
Producers PA/LPA - G/LPA  
Director Ian Morris  
Producer Ross Saunders  
Screenwriter John Patterson  
D.O.P. Ken Patterson  
Editor Kelvin Astbury  
Prod. designer Robert John  
Costume design Carolyn Jones  
Prop. design Carolyn Jones  
Caterer Diana Neal  
Prod. manager Ian Armstrong  
Prod. assistant Shirley Morris  
Prod. accountant Bremerton Productions  
Prod. accountant Bremerton Productions  
Prod. accountant Bremerton Productions  
Art dir. Tony Beach  
Editor Ian Anderson  
Puppet master Ross Hill  
Prop. master Robert Wright  
Sound prop. Marcus Branson  
Stuntman Kim Royle  
Costume in per. Bob Richman  
Leasing agent Gordon McPherson  
Set master Eric Todd  
Budget AFTER

#### Cuts

Cast: Lucy Seal (Juliette), John Doherty, Shirley Branson, McDowell, the Comes and Bruce Richman (Gordon the Robot), Paul Keenan (Oldie), the Water Butlers, Romeo Spain (Giggy the Robot).

Synopsis: The absence of a group of top scientists leads to a child's accident when they enter a building, turned to a life-just-like.

For details of the following see previous issue:

#### AIR FORCE MYTH ROBOMAN

THE CALL FROM TOMORROW  
I START ON FRIDAY  
INNOVATIONS IN LOCAL GOVT  
KETTLED UP  
MUSKMARSH: MICHAEL  
ATHERTON  
WORLD AUST. DAY

#### FILM FESTIVAL PRE-PREPARATION

THE LAW DEPART  
Producer Beccy (Beccy) Price  
User producer Lucy Mardon  
Screenwriter John McElroy  
Length 8 mins  
Synopsis: A story that illustrates an open case that people may have about the operations of the Sheriff's office and encourages men and women to consider a career as a Police or Special Officer.

#### OFFICE MANAGEMENT

Producer James Craig  
User producer Michaela  
Screenwriter Bridget Gough  
Length 10 mins

Synopsis: A video to educate people in managers or their subordinates of their responsibilities.

#### SOYAPOLY: A LITTLE RESTRAINT

Prod. producer Lucy MacLaren  
Screenwriter Dennis K. Smith  
Length 10 mins  
Synopsis: An encouraging look at how a family copes with the different restraint needed by different-aged children and suggests how to keep them amused without driving one up the wall.

#### PROGRESSION

##### THE CRIMINAL COALIT

Prod. company Barry Price  
Director Lucy MacLaren  
Producer Michaela  
User producer Michaela  
Screenwriter Lucy MacLaren  
D.O.P. Lucy MacLaren  
Editor Lucy MacLaren  
Prod. designer Lucy MacLaren  
Length 11 mins  
Genre: 17 mins  
Cast (No details supplied)  
Synopsis: A video to explain the problems that pre-school children have in coping with adults, and suggests strategies for parents and teachers to help children learn a realistic expectation of what will happen during their day.

##### DRUGS: DARING

Prod. company Supervision  
Director Peter Campbell  
User producer Lucy MacLaren  
D.O.P. John Carter  
Editor Paul Underhill  
Length 8 mins  
Genre: 17 mins  
Cast (No details supplied)

Synopsis: *Drug: Daring* explains the dangers of drug-taking to a young man who thinks he knows everything about it.

##### FOOD AND WINE IN MELBOURNE

Prod. company Souvenirs  
Director Trevor McMillan  
Producer Trevor McMillan  
User producer Lucy MacLaren  
Screenwriter Paul Sherriff  
Length 10 mins  
Genre: 17 mins  
Synopsis: *Food and Wine* is a video designed to promote Melbourne as a vital centre of art and culture.

##### CREAM FIZZ BEEF

Prod. company The Film House  
Director Robert Mardon  
Producer Philip Hayes  
User producer Robert Mardon  
Screenwriter Glynne Williams  
D.O.P. Robert Mardon  
Editor Lynne Williams  
Length 8 mins  
Genre: 17 mins  
Synopsis: This video will excite the Victorian pastoral food industry, including all aspects of farm, production, processing and packaging to food and export industries.

##### ME AND MY BIG MOUTH

Prod. co. Taproot and Unilink  
Director Lester Hyatt  
Producer Dennis Tappard  
User producer Lucy MacLaren  
Screenwriter Dennis Tappard  
D.O.P. Brian Anderson  
Editor Mark Tappard  
Music Terry Gough  
Length 10 mins  
Genre: 17 mins  
Synopsis: *Me and My Big Mouth* is a series of eight videos presented as a learning resource for adults with low literacy levels. *Me and My Big Mouth* is designed to break down feelings of uselessness and poor assessment of the availability of learning resources.

see each of the tools designed for an interesting look at our needs for jolly-minded children.

#### MELBOURNE DOWN TO DUST

Prod. company Souvenirs  
Director Sally Silverton  
Producer Tracey McMillan  
User producer Rachel Davis  
Screen Geoff White  
Length 10 mins  
Genre: 17 mins  
Synopsis: *Down to Dust* is a simple design education ray, an audience of 10 architects, design and entrepreneurs.

##### THESE LIVE IN OUR CLASS

Director Mark John  
Producer Eddie Armstrong  
User producer Lucy MacLaren  
Screenwriter Dennis Taylor  
D.O.P. Gomer Wood  
Editor Philip Brady  
Length 10 mins  
Genre: 17 mins  
Synopsis: *These Live in Our Class* explains the problems that pre-school children have in coping with adults, and suggests strategies for parents and teachers to help children learn a realistic expectation of what will happen during their day.

##### POST-PREPRODUCTION

Prod. company Post  
Director Wayne Tindall  
Producer Alan Tindall  
User producer Lucy MacLaren  
Editor Wayne Tindall  
Length 8 mins  
Synopsis: A video demonstrating the new procedure of digital care for the disabled.

##### MELBOURNE: THE BIG EVENT

Director (No genre)  
Producer Tracey McMillan  
User producer Rachel Davis  
Editor Paul Carpenter  
Length 8 mins  
Synopsis: *Melbourne: The Big Event* is designed to promote Melbourne as a vital centre of art and culture.

##### PROCESS OF LEARNING

Director (No genre)  
Producer Glynne Williams  
User producer Robert Mardon  
Screenwriter Paul Sherriff  
Length 8 mins  
Synopsis: *Process of Learning* is a corporate video produced by a consortium of 10 food processing industry.

##### BEST FILM AND TELEVISION OFFICE

Prod. company Trevor Price  
Sponsoring body Adult Literacy  
Through Video Care pack  
Director Roger Blundell  
Producer Jonathan Clemons  
User producer Jonathan Clemons  
Editor Roger Blundell  
Length 10 mins  
Genre: 17 mins  
Synopsis: *Best Film* is a series of eight video presentations in a learning resource for adults with low literacy levels. *Best Film* is designed to break down feelings of uselessness and poor assessment of the availability of learning resources.

##### BUSHWOOD BEACH OCEAN CULTURE

Prod. company Barry MacLaren  
Prod. Barry MacLaren  
Sponsoring body Hunter District Water Board  
Director Barry MacLaren  
Producer Chris Ford  
Screenwriter Bob Pursey  
D.O.P. Barry MacLaren  
Sound recordist Brian Gurney  
Editor Martin Ashton  
Prod. manager Brian Gurney  
Animation Michaela Price  
Graphics Michaela Price  
Music David Pursey  
Laboratory Barry MacLaren  
Prod. Barry MacLaren  
Length 10 mins  
Genre: 17 mins  
Synopsis: An excellent series of 10 promotional videos of the progress of the project.

##### CLEAN WATER, CLEAN LAND

Prod. company Barry MacLaren  
Prod. Barry MacLaren  
Sponsoring body Hunter District Water Board  
Director Barry MacLaren  
Producer Chris Ford  
Screenwriter Brian Gurney  
D.O.P. Brian Gurney  
Sound recordist Martin Ashton  
Editor David Pursey  
Animation Michaela Price  
Graphics Barry MacLaren  
Music David Pursey  
Laboratory Barry MacLaren  
Prod. Barry MacLaren  
Length 10 mins  
Genre: 17 mins  
Synopsis: An excellent series of 10 promotional videos of the progress of the project.

##### BRUM SHUT THE BLOW

Prod. company Best and Traffic  
Prod. Barry MacLaren  
Sponsoring body Roads and Traffic Authority  
Director Best and Traffic  
Producer Tony Goss  
Screenwriter Best and Traffic  
D.O.P. Best and Traffic  
Sound recordist Paul Collier  
Editor Best and Traffic  
Length 10 mins  
Genre: 17 mins  
Synopsis: *Brum Shut the Blow* is a series of 10 road safety videos produced by the Roads and Traffic Authority of New South Wales.

##### GETTING STRAIGHT

Prod. company Alan Thomas Prod.  
Sponsoring body NSW Department of Corrections Services  
Director Alan Thomas  
Producer Alan Thomas  
Screenwriter John Liddy  
D.O.P. Geoff Sherriff  
Editor John McElroy  
Prod. manager Roger Dungey  
Music Tony Barry  
Laboratory Roger Dungey  
Prod. Roger Dungey  
Length 10 mins  
Genre: 17 mins  
Synopsis: *Getting Straight* is a documentary-style production about the drug rehabilitation and re-education within New South Wales prisons. The video follows the story of 'Tom', a young prisoner sentenced for a







of children from all over the world are linked through data computers, and in conjunction Creative Handicaps which enables them not to fight against a gang of terrorists in a Multi-dimensional State.

#### PRODUCTION

**PRODUCTION**  
Prod. company Creative Kids  
Principal创制 Michael Caneo  
Director Michael Caneo  
Producer Bill Bligh  
Exec. producer Tony Olsson  
Assoc. producer Tony Vicino  
Vice Pres. Vince Stano  
Artistic director John Caneo  
D.G. Jeff Malof  
Visual supervisor Dan Connolly  
Editor Guy Lohberg  
Visual designer David Copping  
Costume designer Anna Stano  
Planning and Development  
Sets director Barbara Bishop  
Casting Jan Stano  
Hair cutting Ross Horner  
Dialogue coach Richard Waller  
Production Crew  
Prod. manager Tony Vicino  
Prod. coordinator Clemence Hart  
Locality manager Giselle Malofka  
Unit manager Peter Stano  
Prod. ass'ts. Ross Horner  
Prod. runners William Vale  
Catering Staff Vicki Stano  
Prod. assistants Complete picture  
Travel coord. Bill Stano  
Catering Crew  
Cater's assistant  
Focus puller Max Edgcombe  
Clapper/loader Max Mongridge  
Aerial phone Ann McPhee  
Catering rep. Karen Allerton  
Kitchen rep. Kelvin Kelly  
Richard H. Jenkins  
Catering rep. Craig Bryant  
Hair stylist Steve Johnson  
Make-up Karen Horner  
Costume rep. Phil Mulligan  
Prod. manager John Atkinson  
Prod. coordinator Michael Horner  
Wardrobe rep. Michael McRae  
Costume designer Colleen McRae  
Cost. D. Coordinator Bryan  
Booker rep. Jeremy Borrell  
Wardrobe rep. Karen Stano

Blondresser John Smith  
Special fx Tim Fransen  
Stunt coord. Peter West  
Safety editor Art Thorpe  
Unit mixer Johnathan Adams  
Unit photography Steve Wickens  
Unit print. Steve Stanley Wood  
Catering Ray Bally  
Art Department Art director Bill James  
Johnson Miles  
Art supervisor Steve Manning  
Art department Leslie Green  
Props buyer Peter Marlow  
Sound prop. Murray Edwards  
Art runner Ray Stano  
Production Wardrobe Anton Bremar  
Wardrobe supervisor Paula O'Leary  
Wardrobe buyer Dennis Cawley  
Sound supervisor Paul Kierke  
Dancer Cawley  
Animals Horse master Bob Cavenagh  
Horse wrangler John Parkinson  
Cleat Horse Chas Stane  
Shayne Williams  
Construction Dept. Setman artist Andy Delphine  
Cater's manager John Parker  
Leading hand David Fouldstone  
Set dresser Mark Wilkinson  
Sustains CBA  
Art director prop. Will Shanderson  
Post production Post production Dan Lohberg  
Post production rep. Jim Lohberg  
Art editor Michaela McRae  
Laboratory Mike Lake  
Designs Hines, T.  
Staging work TBA  
Video supervisor by Complain from  
Cillian Jenkins Complain from America  
Cam. Adam Jones (Chart), Tex Williford  
(Martial), David McCullough (Part 2), Ben  
Cullinan (Quay), Colin McFadden (Martial),  
Leah Taylor (Journal), Lorileigh Compton  
(Martial martial)  
Sound rep. A. Frenchman, John  
Johnstone, a bit of a wild American rock  
music, sport-rock band which  
strength is in the music he loves and  
that he has for his audience range  
and a range of dance floor power  
and energy.

See previous issue for details of  
ADVERTISING RATES OR ADVERTISING  
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*Laboratory* *Editor* BRUCE BRAUN *Public Relations* DEREK RICHARDS *Production* PAMELA HAMMOND and LOUISE CHESLETT

*Johnston* *Editor* STEVE MITCHELL and KEVIN WILLIAMS *Supervising* TONY CARR and PETER ROWE *Public Relations* MARK FREEMAN

*Production* PHILLIP GRACE *Supervising* MALCOLM MARR and LOZ WILDRON and SHARON MARTIN

*Music* *Production* CHARLES BAYLISS and RICHARD BYMOND *Supervising* MEG KOERNIG *Production* KEVIN WILLIAMS *Editor* AUSTIN BARTOLO

*Supervising* KEVIN WILLIAMS *Production* PETER WATSON JNR

*Editor* / *Music* PETER WATSON JNR and STUART BEATTY *Original Story* GEOFF SHARLOW *Associate* STAN BARBER

*Associate* VAL CORKE and PAT MILD *Delivery* VICTOR MITCHELL *Supervision* LINDA MURPHY



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